Camden's Compliment To

Walt Whitman

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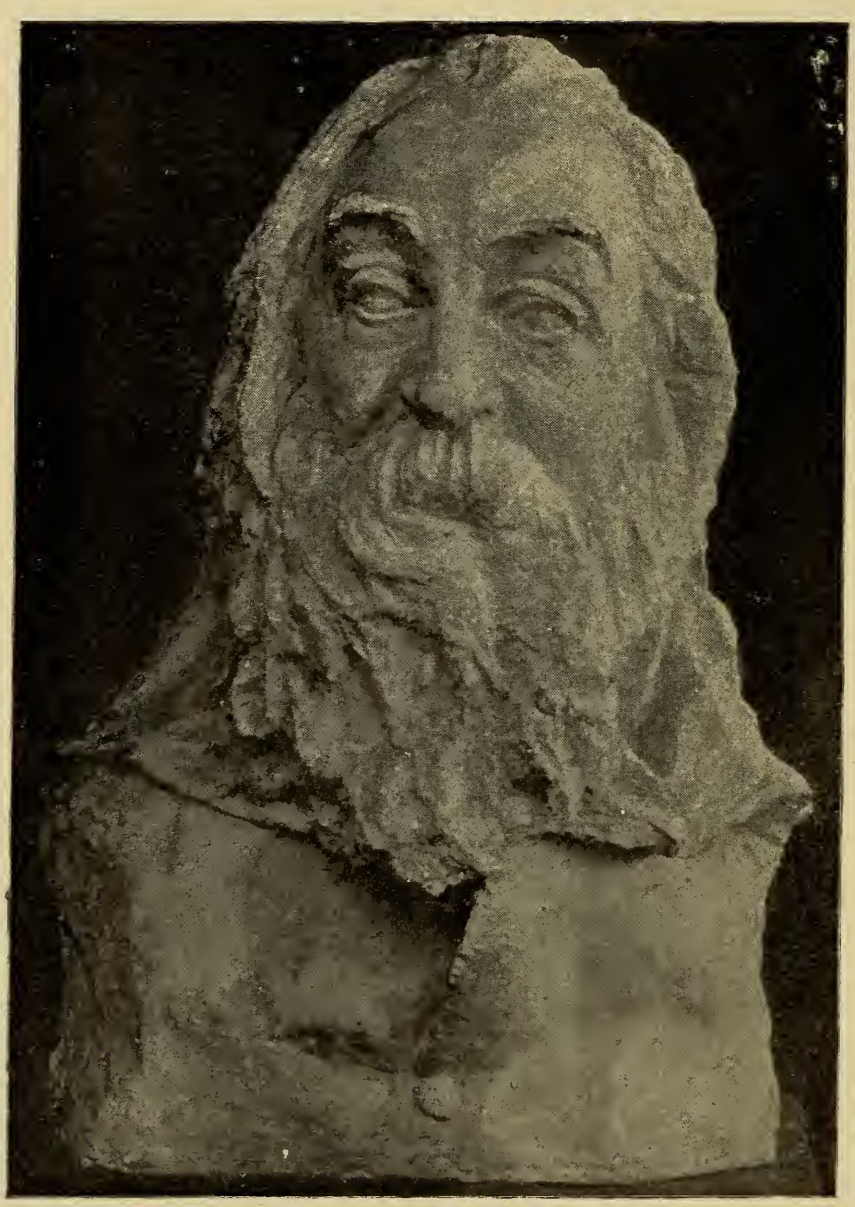

WALT WHITMAN

Modeled in clay by Sidney H. Morse, 1887

CAMDEN'S COMPLIMENT

TO

WALT WHITMAN

MAY 31, 1889

NOTES, ADDRESSES, LETTERS, TELEGRAMS

EDITED BY

HORACE L. TRAUBEL

PHILADELPHIA
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Autobiographic Note. *From an old "remembrance copy."*

Was born May 31, 1819, in my father's farm-house, at West Hills, L. I., New York State. My parents' folks mostly farmers and sailors—on my father's side, of English—on my mother's, (Van Velsor's,) from Hollandic immigration. There was, first and last, a large family of children; (I was the second.) We moved to Brooklyn while I was still a little one in frocks—and there in B. I grew up out of the frocks—then, as child and boy, went to the public schools—then to work in a printing office.

When only sixteen or seventeen years old, and for two years afterward, I went to teaching country schools down in Queens and Suffolk counties, Long Island, and "boarded round." Then, returning to New York, worked as printer and writer, (with an occasional shy at "poetry.")

1848–'9.—About this time went off on a leisurely journey and working expedition (my brother Jeff with me,) through all the Middle States, and down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Lived a while in New Orleans, and worked there. (Have lived quite a good deal in the Southern States.) After a time, plodded back northward, up the Mississippi, the Missouri, &c., and around to, and by way of, the great lakes, Michigan, Huron and Erie, to Niagara Falls and lower Canada—finally returning through Central New York, and down the Hudson.

1851–'54.—Occupied in house-building in Brooklyn. (For a little of the first part of that time in printing a daily and weekly paper.)

1855.—Lost my dear father, this year, by death. . . . Commenced putting *Leaves of Grass* to press, for good—after many MS. doings and undoings—(I had great trouble in leaving out the stock "poetical" touches—but succeeded at last.)

1862.—In December of this year went down to the field of War in Virginia. My brother George reported badly wounded in the Fredericksburgh fight. (For 1863 and '64, see *Specimen Days*.)

1865 to '71.—Had a place as clerk (till well on in '73) in the Attorney General's Office, Washington.

(New York and Brooklyn seem more like *home*, as I was born near, and brought up in them, and lived, man and boy, for 30 years. But I lived some years in Washington, and have visited, and partially lived, in most of the Western and Eastern cities.)

1873.—This year lost, by death, my dear, dear mother—and, just before, my sister Martha—(the two best and sweetest women I have ever seen or known, or ever expect to see.)

Same year, a sudden climax and prostration from paralysis. Had been simmering inside for several years; broke out during those times temporarily and then went over. But now a serious attack, beyond cure. Dr. Drinkard, my Washington physician, (and a first-rate one,) said it was the result of too extreme bodily and emotional strain continued at Washington and "down in front," in 1863, '4 and '5. I doubt if a heartier, stronger, healthier physique ever lived, from 1840 to '70. My greatest call (Quaker) to go around and do what I could among the suffering and sick and wounded was that I seem'd to be *so strong and well*. (I considered myself invulnerable.) Quit work at Washington, and moved to Camden, New Jersey—where I have lived since, and now, (September, 1889,) write these lines.

(A long stretch of illness, or half-illness, with some lulls. During these latter, have revised and printed over all my books—bro't out "November Boughs"—and at intervals travelled to the Prairie States, the Rocky Mountains, Canada, to New York, to my birthplace in Long Island, and to Boston. But physical disability and the war-paralysis above alluded to have settled upon me more and more, the last year or so.) W. W.

At the Complimentary Dinner, Camden, New Jersey, May 31, 1889.

WALT WHITMAN* SAID: MY FRIENDS, THOUGH ANNOUNC'D TO GIVE AN ADDRESS, THERE IS NO SUCH INTENTION. FOLLOWING THE IMPULSE OF THE SPIRIT (FOR I AM AT LEAST HALF OF QUAKER STOCK), I HAVE OBEYED THE COMMAND TO COME AND LOOK AT YOU, FOR A MINUTE, AND SHOW MYSELF, FACE TO FACE; WHICH IS PROBABLY THE BEST I CAN DO. BUT I HAVE FELT NO COMMAND TO MAKE A SPEECH; AND SHALL NOT THEREFORE ATTEMPT ANY. ALL I HAVE FELT THE IMPERATIVE CONVICTION TO SAY I HAVE ALREADY PRINTED IN MY BOOKS OF POEMS OR PROSE; TO WHICH I REFER ANY WHO MAY BE CURIOUS. AND SO, HAIL AND FAREWELL. DEEPLY ACKNOWLEDGING THIS DEEP COMPLIMENT, WITH MY BEST RESPECTS AND LOVE TO YOU PERSONALLY—TO CAMDEN—TO NEW-JERSEY, AND TO ALL REPRESENTED HERE—YOU MUST EXCUSE ME FROM ANY WORD FURTHER.

** Verbatim reprint of his own slip: see page 22.*

To Walt Whitman, *from some younger English Friends, on his Seventieth Birthday, 31st May,* 1889.

Here health we pledge you in one draught of song,
Caught in this rhymster's cup from earth's delight,
Where English fields are green the whole year long,—
The wine of might,
That the new-come spring distils, most sweet and strong,
In the viewless air's alembic, that's wrought too fine for sight.

Good health! we pledge, that care may lightly sleep,
And pain of age be gone for this one day,
As of this loving cup you take, and, drinking deep,
Are glad at heart straightway
To feel once more the friendly heat of the sun
Creative in you, (as when in youth it shone,)
And pulsing brainward with the rhythmic wealth
Of all the summer whose high minstrelsy
Shall soon crown field and tree,
To call back age to youth again, and pain to perfect health.

ERNEST RHYS.

London, 1889.

"RECORDERS AGES HENCE."

GATHERED here, as if sharing one with another a sacred presence—children in common of an event in which as we run we may read lustrous omens—are addresses, letters and briefer greetings, pitched in various heart-tones, which combine to what has proved a great social rather than literary or artistic effect.

No record of Walt Whitman can be extricated from its human entanglements. Walt Whitman can never be rendered in special explanations. Notable in his friendships has been his breadth of resource, and remarkable, therefore, in this compilation, is its exhibition of variety. To apologize for so pregnant a characteristic would be to turn shamefaced from Walt Whitman's first quality.

A few special notes would seem pertinent at this point. The addresses from Henry L. Bonsall, Hamlin Garland and Lincoln L. Eyre, though exigently crowded out of the list at the banquet, demand and are accorded place in this chronicle. While a portion of the letters received in season were read, and many of them were printed in the local papers, and some few even entered into general circulation, it has been left for this vehicle to present a comparatively perfect collection of the messages contributed. Some of the letters and telegrams which appear were sent direct to Walt Whitman, some few to divers members of the arrangement committee, and the main bulk to me. The greetings from abroad, while naturally coming in their own time, often after the event, enter by born credentials into honor and position. It has not been so much the purpose in this publication to charge the banquet direct with exclusive possession of the day, as to bring together, using the banquet as rallying-point, the really remarkable salutes, hastened from all quarters,

in Europe and America, both to Walt Whitman and to his friends in charge of the celebration. Reproduced now in union, they suggest that a power, the most solid and significant in the poetic history of our time, is back of Walt Whitman's fame. The specification of sources alone strikes those with wonder who have slightingly or insufficiently known his *clientèle*. It is to give shape and permanency to such testimony that this volume is produced.

After it was definitely decided to celebrate Walt Whitman's birthday by some sort of public meeting, and after the question of the nature of that meeting had been settled, urgent and careful preparations were at once begun. Originating with a near group of Walt Whitman's friends, who conceived clearly the appropriateness of such an inclusive acknowledgment, there was no intermission of labor till the achieved event itself satisfied them that their plans had been wisely laid. Several business meetings were held. A committee, composed of H. L. Bonsall, Thomas B. Harned, Geoffrey Buckwalter, Alex. G. Cattell, Louis T. Derousse, E. A. Armstrong, Wilbur F. Rose and Cyrus H. K. Curtis—all local men—was intrusted with the executive work. A circular, describing the purpose in view, was signed by H. L. Bonsall and Thomas B. Harned, and liberally issued, indistinguishably to near and remote parties. Walt Whitman was well aware of most that transpired. The circumspection that his physical condition imposes assumed, in our eyes, at this period, a special importance, lest by some unforeseen turn he should be kept away from the meeting, and we thereby miss the crown of the feast. There arose details which from time to time were referred to him. Fortunately for the completeness of the event, so much depending upon his physical condition, May 31st hailed him refreshed from a good night's rest, and made that certain which up to the last moment had raised a natural solicitude. The day was warm and capricious, but in the hours of his transit there was no storm, and nature smiled on us even from clouded brows.

Morgan's Hall, with its plain portals, never before had lent

itself to an occasion as large and radical as this. Had every man gone there without one articulated word shaped to the purpose, to those who knew by and for what the celebration was caused, and to the world that will one day insist upon confessing its lax hospitality, there floods a significance that lifts the spirit into high regions. Who but caught the sniff of victory in the air? Let the mind's eye run along the line of events from that far year 1855 to the hour of this latest gathering—from the earliest tracings of Walt Whitman's inimitable sweet courage, when the world held its nose, afraid to smell of the natural divinities, when tradition broke with its rough sword into the very song of the poet, along the evidence of the gradual achievement of friends, the yielding point by point of the protests of error and antipathy, the clustering, and fiery admonitory speech, of great souls early to greet the world's new summoner: of O'Connor, ample in speech and life, free to all invitations of freedom in his great brother-spokesman, and so liberal of the joy of liberty that the world almost feared, as the world always does the first note of release, his jubilant song; he in some respects the largest, the most intrepid, the most unswerving spirit in the literature of the age: of Burroughs, the philosopher of woods, who came upon Whitman as upon a divinity of the fresh solitudes that drew and enjoined, and who from the day that awoke him has been calmly steadfast to his glorious vision. These things, and many others closely related, have not only done much to give direction to literary genuineness, but have vastly affected the general history of America. The full power of the influence will not in our day be perceived. This evening, however, radiant hints of it were written upon the walls, curved in and out the folds of the pendant flags, and shared the miracle of the vines along the tables that bore the feast.

A wise forethought prompted the choice of early evening—running from five o'clock on—as best serving the convenience of hosts and guest. Many came markedly before the suggested hour, to linger along conversationally into the general proceedings. As cannot be too clearly understood, this was not designed to be, and was not, a mere craft dinner, celebrating a literary

consummation. To one who belonged in the district, the familiar faces of townsmen were right and left. These townsmen were lawyers, officials, commercial authorities, assembled out of the every-day interests of the place, and formed the bulk of the diners. In the half-hour that preceded the banquet, the upper rooms of the building arrayed notable groups, and served as a broad field for introductions. The drink on the table, the negro attendants, the assiduity of the committeemen (still gravely solicitous), were minor facts to remember. The irrepressible reporter was at work with the first arrival. Richard Watson Gilder, Julian Hawthorne, Hamlin Garland, and other distant comers, were distinctly centres of interest. Here were men prominent in the political life of Philadelphia, men known in her courts, men engaged in her large trade enterprises and interested in her philanthropies; and observantly intermingling with all these, editors who kept in the background of apparent participation, but who had come leaving all but eyes and ears at home. From across the river were also a dozen figures of young men doing handiwork in a rising literature, and not unnoted John Foster Kirk, veteran in his own right and veteran by memory of the great Prescott. Not to mention all, yet not to spare Johnston, of New York, gloriously devoted beyond any statement that could be made here; McKay, explicitly now Whitman's publisher, who will be best remembered for his connection with Whitman after the period of the Osgood ignominy; Harrison S. Morris, one of the newer men, whose service and recognition has been a growing quantity—let me pass on, naming half a dozen who stand very close to Whitman, and deserve more than a casual deference: Gilchrist, for one, who, now happily in America, could give from British lips, and as if out of generous memory of his famous mother, a tender of the unfailing British remembrance of Whitman; for another, Francis Howard Williams, loyal in Whitman's first years in this latitude, when to be loyal and an affectionate host served an imminent need and was a title of nobility; and still more, Clifford, himself a philosopher, product of New England's best influences, out of his profound knowledge of the human side of literature realizing and

incessantly proclaiming Whitman's true stature among the prophets, while confirmed in all convictions by his affectionate personal contact with the seer; and here, too, Harned, whose faith and service, grown not only of proximity but of natural tendencies, have been an unbroken testimony, and Bonsall, through many years of journalistic experience missing no opportunity for the frankest espousal of Whitman, and Buckwalter, who, with these other adjacent two, had labored so ardently to project and to further this celebration. The predominating activity of these men threw everything that transpired into an atmosphere of personal affection. This had been a guarantee invoked from the first.

Whitman himself was not to come to share the feast. He needed to husband his strength. He was more necessary to the success of the after-addresses. Following the chat of the groups in the reception rooms, there resulted, upon a whispered hint which quickly circulated, a quiet flow of people to the hall below. Three tables had there been spread, two almost the full length of the floor, and one crossing them at the head, set apart for those who were to speak, and so arranged that any speaker could at once face the whole line of the guests. The music on the platform, the banners on the walls, the flowers on the table —a bouquet at each plate, and clusters here and there—united to enrich the impression of the hour. Yet nothing was elaborate, and there was no ostentation. On the *menu* card a phototype portrait of Whitman stood felicitously alone, without name or word to any effect; and within, opposing (or uniting) influences, foodstuffs ranged as "The Feast of Reason," and matters of speech as "The Flow of Soul." The afternoon was warm. The wax tapers gleamed with persistent uncertainty. The winds out of doors kept up a rather ominous melody. Everybody had it in mind that, after all, this was *interim*, that the real message-bearer was yet to come, and that, in our dining, we were merely halting on a journey. With this consciousness everywhere prevailing, an hour passed. Good humor was plenty, and talk was free. Was Walt Whitman sure to come? Penetrating all else,

this was upon questioning lips and passed like a charge from man to man.

Walt Whitman was sure to come—yes! Bye-and-bye the hint was given that he had been sent for—then, after the lapse of ten minutes or so, interspersed with further murmur all around the room, a policeman's cry, almost inaudible, near the door, "He's coming!" The intelligence rapidly spread; every man turned, napkin in hand, expectant and absorbed. Chair and guest, carried together up-stairs by two capable policemen, were wheeled into the hall, Whitman's Canadian friend and nurse, Edward Wilkins, guiding. Whitman responded at once to the intense but ineffusive reception by removing his hat and waving it right and left. The whole audience, risen to its feet, but saying nothing, gave him a reverent welcome. How deep that moment of silence! Not till later on were the cheers given, but when given they were given several times, and vehemently. Once Mr. Corning arose with humorous deliberation and said it was on his conscience that we ought to give three cheers for Walt Whitman; and three better cheers than followed never greeted any man. But now, on his entrance, the first to accost Whitman was a colored woman, assisting with the culinary apparatus, who rushed impetuously at him. I thought Whitman's initial expression a wearied one, but he was composed, and not slow in getting his place at the head of the room. At this juncture there was a spontaneous clapping of hands, after which a general resumption of seats. The guest kept his own chair, which was wheeled up against the table. At his right, in order, were Gilder and Gilchrist; at his left Grey, the chairman, Garland, Hawthorne, Garrison and Clifford. Harned, Williams, Bonsall and Eyre were at the long tables.

It was interesting to note that Walt Whitman, who had come to stay "fifteen minutes to half an hour," stayed from two to three hours. There is no doubt but that the aspect of the assemblage inspired and invigorated him. While it was true in the best sense that the occasion owed everything to him, it was also true, in another and minor sense, that he was indebted to it for at least a part of his present almost exhilaration. For, looking

down the long line, the almost crowded tables, it was a subtle influence caught up out of each face, a pervading, living quality in each eye, that for the time being (and, as I believe, for days afterwards—perhaps as lasting even to-day) electrically imparted strength and glow to heart and limb. For this was the year 1889, the city was one not famous in general or literary annals, and a deference, which, if prophesied for Walt Whitman a quarter of a century ago, would have been deemed preposterous, now issued out of the most unpretending environment. So comes a prophet at last who defeats the old proverb.. And this Walt Whitman must in some measure have recognized, for he is a man whom mere appearances never deceive—a man who measures good and ill with the same calm austerity.

Now the speaking commenced. The placid chairman, Samuel H. Grey, came first with his address of welcome. Walt Whitman's little speech was brought in as a response to this, and as a general message for those, whether present or absent, who had thought well to recognize the day. Then were introduced in their order, not exactly as announced on the programme, but as they are now placed, Thomas B. Harned, Herbert H. Gilchrist, Francis Howard Williams, John H. Clifford, Charles G. Garrison, E. A. Armstrong, Richard Watson Gilder and Julian Hawthorne. As the addresses progressed, the scene warmed. Along down the hall men sat sidewise against the tables. The reporters all clustered in the foreground. Many smoked cigars, chairs were tipped, everything appeared untrammeled. After the momentary expression of weariness Whitman's whole manner changed to an absorbed ease. He dealt affectionately by a special bottle of champagne that was brought him. His own speech (which he had had printed on slips, and of which, with an interlined addition, he gave me copies liberally for the reporters) was read, while not powerfully, with a beautiful simplicity, ease and sweetness. His part from that time forward was the part of a child. Sentiments that touched him in the utterances of others drew forth little exclamations of attention or approval or even of dissent. He threw his own presence out into a striking objectivity. Sometimes he would applaud with his bottle there on the

table. Strangely, to-day he was black-coated. The glory of his hair dispensed with a forced nimbus. In front of him had been set a basket of exquisite flowers, out of which, selecting special samples, which he again and again raised to his nose, he seemed to take much enjoyment. It was characteristic of him that, several times, having messages to deliver, he signalled me across the hall. Seeing him so comfortable, the guests were eased. Social tyrannies relaxed. Taking air of Whitman's presence, there prevailed the port and ring of an exquisite freedom.

The controlling vocal manner was a rich union of the elements of perception and emotion, which as a characteristic is perhaps unprecedentedly remarkable and living in Walt Whitman's works and in the man himself. He has since remarked: "I was averse to the public dinner at the outset, but said I should 'let the boys have their own way.'" And so "the boys" had their own way, and Whitman rescued the occasion by being one of "the boys" himself. Details, running into his little interposed remarks, are barely possible here. There was no break in the proceedings as long as he remained. Had he stayed till midnight the rally of his friends would have continued. But that was not to be. We were singularly and unexpectedly blessed in holding him as long as we did. He kept his place till Hawthorne had spoken, and Ingersoll's telegram, delivered to me in the hall and read by Clifford, had had its strong and pithy effect. His desire to withdraw was quickly though not formally communicated to the meeting. He slowly arose from his chair; Gilder and I helped him on with his big blue wrapper. Every man was on his feet in an instant. The chairman, standing in the centre of a thick group, said he would ask George Pierie, who was present (and who is known for much odd and piquant experience in journalist clubs) to lead off with a song—with "Auld Lang Syne," if that could be—and Pierie responding, the melody struggled from lip to lip, and finally broke out into a choral power that even elicited Whitman's contribution. Then Whitman sat down in his chair again, gave quiet response to the hurried special congratulations of familiars and others who crowded about him, and was slowly wheeled out of his narrow quarters.

His basketed flowers, put in his lap and so taken home, for days after kept place and odor on the stove in his little parlor. One hand and another, one solicitous face and another, was bent upon him with its eager comradeship. But the chair was kept on its way, parting the crowd gently, and in the end reaching the door and passing out into the lobby. Not so proclaimed, this was still the dropping of the curtain. Again the policemen did their special and cherished service. Will it be a reminiscence for the ears of children's children? Soon was Whitman gone into the night. All attempts to reorganize the meeting were fruitless. Within five minutes following Whitman's departure the great mass of people had left the hall, and efforts to read letters and telegrams were therefore mainly fruitless. Whitman gone, the meeting had gone with him, as though a more than Hamelinic pipe had been played. No one lingered but the assiduous reporters, who, though the first to come, were the last to leave.

I was asked the other day, Is it left for you to sum up the event? But what need to sum up that which, rather than being fragmentary, was at once a direct and entire story? Camden, honoring Walt Whitman, was more than Camden; for through Camden the world had voice, and that world not the world of a more or less petty and undiscriminating to-day, but the world that our poet in his noblest moods has invoked. Camden had risen to its spiritual gifts. Breaking away from concrete tyrannies, Camden in this act bore testimony that Walt Whitman, prophesying a grander America, and wearied and worried by no scholastic chastisement, was to be rendered just tribute at last. Extravagant as it may seem to say so, this banquet would not have had half the significance, given strictly by authors, or made exclusively literary. Fortunately, it was not what would be called a literary occasion. Rescued from a restricted, it was rendered to the greater America. What one town, in the sense that includes all classes, may do to-day, a developed America and a freed Europe will ultimately compound in sharing on their vaster areas. But whatever the extent of recognition, the type of recognition will remain what it was this day to this simple

and single constituency. Except for the absence of women and of the distinctively mechanical classes, the unconstraint and felicity of the event was from beginning to end as generous as the spirit of the man it was aimed to celebrate.

O'Connor said of Walt Whitman in 1866: "To the hour of judgment, to the hour of sanity—let me resign him." However near or remote the arrival of that inevitable sunrise, this record may be taken with reference to it as a substantial contribution. Where thirty years ago men scorned to seriously discuss Walt Whitman, a representative paper sends to-day one of its best men (by interesting accident set right next me at the banquet) "to report the spirit of the occasion." "Thou must be a fool and a churl for a long season," says Emerson, addressing the ideal poet. Darwin once wrote, in the earlier years of his knotty labors, "And though I shall get more kicks than half-pennies, I will, life serving, attempt my work." Life has served Walt Whitman, to whom it is as natural to live heroically as to live at all, to a harvest of his own generous sowing. Criticism has entered upon the stage of kindliness. One more step—the step of unconventional examination—and the deed is done. Camden's demonstration has helped to clear the air. After this certain of the old protests must forever stand convicted. Reporters, editors, writers, men of the law and of affairs, giving forth here an utterance of faith, have passed the word far onward. The attitude of the press was liberal and affectionate from the first. The unanimity of its good feeling was so marked that some confessed a disappointment, contending that a feast without spice had lost an essential factor. But however Walt Whitman, as he declared, may have felt smothered in the sugar and honey of attention, to his best friends it is clear enough that this event, multiplied a thousand times, will be needed before the balance of justice in the world's treatment of him has been secured.

And now, sacredly to be ventured, among pulsing and imperative last utterances, taking shape of an intense experience, how can I send this little memorial trusted to my hands off on its

career without a word my own, sharing the privilege of the feast? For though silent before the common temptations to speech, at this moment, in this circle, body and spirit prevailed upon and absorbed, I have stood and watched, counting confidently in this victory my own victory and America's as well, and recalling with grateful thought my gracious opportunities through which personally to know the man on whom so great a charge had been laid. Standing by Walt Whitman's side through all the battle of the past year, braving his dangers, sharing his defeats and rescues, glorying in the love that allied me in ever more willing service, watching the coming and going of friends, sensitive to the fine growth of popular reverence—who could have known better than I knew, looking in his face that memorable night, how potent the chosen instruments of his love, his more than armored courage and justice, had proved in the end? I dare not withdraw from the group, nor stay and say nothing. But staying, and given voice, let me vein my thought, though it were brought into a sentence, with flow of heart's blood. Let us all, I should say, cherish the fact that this was a non-literary incident, as Walt Whitman is a non-literary man and his books are non-literary books; that as Walt Whitman's future is in the hands, not of an anti-literary, but of a more than literary America, so it rang well in the tone of all this day said and done that it struck out of our largest and most varied life. It has seemed to me that this is what Walt Whitman himself must most have desired. Faith such as his guarantees universal means and universal ends. He realized early that the world misunderstood only that it might eventually understand. He has known well enough that the man who has the truth has no enemies—that whatever traduction appears self-appoints its doom. He has been serene in physical trials and just as serene in spiritual battle; he knows that if he is a sun, he must have the sun's patience—that if he is not, impatience will neither hasten nor defer obscuration; he has steadfastly turned his back on every effort of friend or critic to bring him to endorse half universes; he has rung the alarum for behoof of humanism in literature—the only real conservator; he has shown that America can persevere in but one course, and

that course the course of the stars and tides, redolent of entire health and of untrammeled manhood; he has protested against obscene delicacy, and has given to the word sacredness a large meaning impossible to even the best of past scriptures. Oh! what a current of deep meanings seizes the first thought of enumeration! I dare not proceed. But to stand near as I have stood near; to know in his deeds and on his lips a never-swerving confirmative testimony; to realize the harmony of his past and his present; to catch and stay out of the hurrying life of our time the eloquent records of a consecrated day—not fleeting and ephemeral flatteries, but throbbing and capacious evidences drawn from the very heart of revelation and devotion—is to stand in the presence of that supreme, that last, that consoling circumstance of worlds, which the story of every discoverer and his final glad audience unfolds.

H. L. T.

CAMDEN, N. J., July 4, 1889.

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INVOCATION: J. Leonard Corning.

Thanks to the Father of all for the light and inspiration of genius and virtue! Thanks for great and mighty souls, the gifts of Heaven to all the ages of time! All praise to the Father for guiding words of truth and the sweet bonds of friendship and affection! Thanks for this hour of gratulation, calling its greetings from home and distant lands! Let the Father's benediction be upon our honored and beloved guest and upon all our hearts and households! Amen.

ADDRESSES.

SAMUEL H. GREY: CAMDEN.

WELCOME.

GENTLEMEN:—I have been selected by the committee of the citizens of Camden who have had the matter in charge to act as president upon this occasion, and upon me, as president, has devolved the agreeable duty of expressing in your behalf toward the guest of the evening, whom we are here to entertain and who by his presence bestows upon us as high an honor as we could ever receive, a cordial welcome. We, as citizens of Camden, the workman from his shop, the merchant from his counting-room, the lawyer from his office, even the preacher from his pulpit—nay, more, the judge from his court—all sorts and conditions of men—come here together as fellow-citizens of this town this evening to welcome the most distinguished citizen not only of this town, but of this State. Distinguished, not as a soldier; not as a merchant; not as an accumulator of wealth; not as an orator whose silver tongue a senate sways; not as a preacher, who admonishes when we do wrong and sometimes sets us an example to do right; but as a man among men whose heart beats in unison with the great heart of humanity. Generous, brave, disinterested, honest, sincere—all manly qualities are here impersonated in our guest. Patriotic, in his younger manhood he made sacrifices for his country from the effects of which he yet suffers. Honest, he has lived to a green old age, poor in purse but rich in every quality and in every endowment which makes manhood excellent. As a poet, his rugged verse rises above the dead level of ordinary literature as a majestic mountain rises above a plain. This man with these qualities—social, personal, intellectual—we are here this evening to greet. He is here by his presence to bestow upon us an honor. It gives me pleasure, gentlemen, speaking for you and in your behalf, to extend to our townsman a cordial welcome, which words better

than mine could frame or phrase. I greet him as the honored guest of his fellow-citizens on this his seventieth birthday.

WALT WHITMAN

responded briefly: See page 5.

THOMAS B. HARNED: CAMDEN.

OUR FELLOW-CITIZEN.

In the year 1873 Walt Whitman came to the city of Camden "old, poor and paralyzed." He had no thought then that his life would be continued to its present stage. His best years had been devoted to the sacred duty of nursing the sick and wounded soldiers in the army hospitals at Washington. No tongue can tell the extent of that ministry. With untiring devotion, vigilance and fidelity, without fee or reward, he served his country in the hour of her greatest need. The history of the secession war presents no instance of nobler fulfilment of duty or sublimer sacrifice. But the stalwart and majestic physique had to succumb to the terrible strain. The man whom we here honor came among us to spend his last days with those who were near and dear to him. His physical and spiritual condition at this time is best pictured in his own language:

"My terminus near,
The clouds already closing in upon me,
The voyage balk'd, the course disputed, lost,
I yield my ships to Thee.

"My hands, my limbs grow nerveless,
My brain feels rack'd, bewilder'd,
Let the old timbers part, I will not part,
I will cling fast to Thee, O God, though the waves buffet me,
Thee, Thee at least I know."

But the old timbers did not part. The old ship had been built too strongly. Rest and the ministrations of loving friends prolonged his life, and for more than fifteen years he has been our most distinguished citizen.

It is not my purpose to speak on this occasion of Walt Whitman's books or of his place in literature. On that field he has baffled all classification. While every epithet of rancor and opprobrium has been heaped upon his published writings, no man ever had truer friends. The controversy which he has uncon-

sciously provoked in the literary world is probably without a parallel. Only now are we beginning to realize the importance of his life-work and the grandeur of the man.

The person Walt Whitman is greater than his book, or any book. He is made of that heroic stuff which creates such books. He himself is the great Epic of the senses, the passions, the attributes of the body and soul. Dear as he is to America and her democracy, he yet belongs to the whole world. He declares the perfection of the earth—its fruitful soil, its navigable seas, its majestic mountains, its forests, all created things. His love for the aggregate race is intense and boundless. His sense of the universal is sublime. He is the greatest living optimist. He is the incarnation of naturalism. He knows neither convention nor hypocrisy. His cheerfulness is like a perpetual ray of sunshine. His kind and generous heart beats responsive to life wherever found.

This is the kind of man we have had among us for many years. How we like to speak of his gentleness, his charity, his wisdom, his simplicity!—of his majestic figure, cast in an antique mould, his ruddy countenance, his inspiring voice, his strong and classic face! We have seen him on our streets, or frequenting the ferry-boats, or driving over the neighboring roads. His companions have been from every walk of life—more especially from among the poor and the plain. He has taken a personal interest in the welfare of mechanics, deck-hands, car-drivers. No class has escaped his attention, his affection: roughs, the criminal, the neglected, the forgotten, have been equally included. In nothing does he show his simplicity as in his love for children. They all know him. There is that about him which draws and holds them. And yet he is visited by persons of prominence from all parts of the world. This city to-day is known to thousands of persons in distant lands merely because it is the home of Walt Whitman. Emerson says that "the knowledge that in the city is a man who invented the railroad raises the credit of all the citizens." It has so proved with us. Our citizenship is raised because in our city lives the author of "Leaves of Grass."

I deem it a great privilege to pay Walt Whitman the tribute of my respect. It has been my good fortune to be counted among his personal friends, and I desire to emphasize with great clearness my conviction that every moment of his life tallies with the teachings proclaimed throughout his books. He is eminently consistent. He does not bend the knee to wealth or power. To him the ragged urchin is as dear as the learned scholar. We who know him best know that he assumes nothing. In him

nature has ample play. He has taken the rough with the smooth, and in his sorest trials has not been heard to utter a complaint. I do not believe there ever lived a man less restricted by his environment. He cares neither for praise nor censure, ever journeying "the even tenor of his way." Let the day bring forth health or sickness, pleasure or pain, gain or loss—with a peace that passes all understanding he says: "It is all right, anyhow." They who have listened to the magic of his magnetic voice and have shared his simple prophetic conversation, which is "a university in itself," know how careful he is not to speak ill of any one. He never indulges in carping criticism. His wit is "gentle and bright" and "never carries a heartstain on its blade." Frugal in his habits, he has always expended upon himself the smallest amount possible, in order that he might aid others whom he deemed more needy. His charity is divine.

But I cannot enter into any detailed analysis of Walt Whitman's character. It is a familiar story to many here. For the last year we have heard and known how his life has hung in the balance. Little did we suppose that he could withstand his latest sickness and be with us to-day. How can I hope to utter what so fills our hearts as we come together here? We all say we have known him. Have any of us known him? Does not such a life baffle our understanding?

We have assembled on this spot to-day to honor him—to look upon his radiant, serene face, and to thank him for the lesson he has taught us and will continue to teach to coming races.

His life-work is finished. He awaits the end with complacency. The consecration is complete. We crown him poet, prophet, philosopher, the incarnation of modern humanity.

Camden will be best known and honored because it has known and honored Walt Whitman. Succeeding generations will do him reverence, and the little frame-house on Mickle street will be a shrine toward which pilgrims will travel in their adoration of him as one of the world's immortals.

"Genius," says Macaulay, "is like the peak of Teneriffe, which catches the beams of the morning sun an hour before the rest of the world."

From that high eminence, as the end draws near, with a faith in immortality which is abiding and sublime, Walt Whitman beholds the vision of the future—

> "As if some miracle, some hand divine unseal'd my eyes,
> Shadowy vast shapes smile through the air and sky,
> And on the distant waves sail countless ships,
> And anthems in new tongues I hear saluting me."

HERBERT HARLAKENDEN GILCHRIST:

HAMPSTEAD, LONDON, ENGLAND.

FRIENDS ACROSS THE SEAS.

How can my arms lift the pennant that floats proudly over the British Empire, and unfurl its heavy folds in the wild summer evening of this inimitable occasion?

How can the inarticulate voice of an artist salute the poet—strike the note—utter the message of respect and love from the toiling masses, the philosophers and scholars, of democratic and intellectual Great Britain?

I ask you gently to hear, kindly to judge my speech. "Piece out my imperfections with your thoughts," think when I talk of England's men and women that you see them. "For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our" poet.

It is true that I was born and have lived amongst the courageous handful of undaunted men and women who first greeted Walt Whitman and the publication of "Leaves of Grass" with a ringing cheer of welcome—a handful that has grown into hundreds, thousands—and which is still spreading under the influence of that heavenly force.

The great master's voice has moved to distant continents. "O waters, I have finger'd every shore with you." "That melody of life with its cunning tones" has swept across the Atlantic, entered the thatched cottage and ivy-grown moat-encircled grange—invaded the universities, and within the girdle of those antique and moss-grown walls of Oxford and Cambridge the don and the under-graduate have been stirred by the poems which glow with life.

The immortal reverberations floated east, south, west and north, till the waves struck the thoughts of workmen—toilers at Sheffield, Newcastle and Glasgow, including all of Scotland and Ireland. Our guest can picture in his mind's eye the sagacious, good-natured glance which shines upon him to-day from beneath soot-begrimed brows and smirched faces of brawny colliers, powerful smiths and mechanics.

Walt Whitman, whose pieces have strengthened and sweetened the lives of the people, has moved the aristocrat, whose soul has expanded under the influence of the poet's great heart. Thought cannot be walled out by caste or the mask of materials, and the sweeping voice of the bard has taken captive ear and heart some

of the true men and women throughout the length and breadth of the united kingdom.

Noble women of Great Britain have shown, by pen and speech, to our warped and blunted masculine natures, the spiritual meaning and religious fervor which shine through and illuminate the leaves in "Leaves of Grass."

The prosperity of this occasion forces upon my memory an expression that our guest made to myself during darker, less happy times; he said—"no magic incident of hairsbreadth escape in the 'Fairy Queen' surpassed the resuscitation of myself from the perils of death by brave champions in 1876. That movement was the turning point of my fortunes. They had been gloomy, ebbing and waning for nearly ten years; and the storing and filling my pockets to supply the personal needs and necessities of life—which had got to be at that time in the slough and very sink of perdition—this magic lift, as in the old legends, of warm support and cheering responses from the big fellows, from Alfred Tennyson, Lord Houghton, William Michael Rossetti, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Robert Buchanan and Edward Carpenter, was accomplished by my British friends, who sprang into the breach and plucked me from the perils and jaws of death, as Harry Hotspur would

> . . . "'dive into the bottom of the deep,
> Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
> And pluck up drowned honour by the locks.'"

"Consideration like an angel came" in time; and this philosopher who has given the world so much, has, king-like, shown us how a man should take the world's stray offerings. The proud poet triumphantly emerges from beneath the base-black cloud of contumely and neglect—the insolence of office and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes—passes through this ugly rack and shows us by his pride of port his sail of greatness.

Your Washington, Jefferson and Monroe have given you emphatic warnings against "entangling alliances" with any European people or any foreign people. But there is a power and faculty in the race—*adhesiveness* is the phrenological term—magnetic friendship and good-will of the common humanity of all nations—that they would certainly have encouraged, and which all good publicists would ever encourage.

Of this faculty "Leaves of Grass" is the book, and Walt Whitman is the poet, beyond any hitherto known: he scatters it not only through all the States of this immense and variform Union, but all the lands and races of the globe. America, to

him, stands really greater in that than in all its wealth, products and even intellect. By him, poetry is to be its main exemplar and teacher.

Thus the succor which rescued your great one was not the work of individuals, no !—nor should it be viewed as the friendly privilege and monopoly of the mother country—the fair action was rather a compliment to the pride of America from the British Isles as typifying the brotherliness of men, and in cementing a larger *guild of literature* than the world has hitherto known.

Thirteen summers ago I first met our guest—to-day I find myself standing within the sunshine of the poet's eye.

In behalf of and for the faithful sons and daughters of the British Isles, and the friends across the seas, I wish Walt Whitman, who sits honored and surrounded with troops of friends, *many* happy *returns* of the *day*.

FRANCIS HOWARD WILLIAMS:

GERMANTOWN.

PAST AND PRESENT.

The history of all truly great movements is a chronicle of long injustice and of final triumph.

When Wordsworth raised the standard of revolt against the formalism of the school of Pope, he brought down upon his head the vials of English literary wrath, and not until he was an old man did he conquer a recognition and win the just reward of his heroism.

For years and years Walt Whitman has been the standard-bearer in a movement no less important than that against the English classical school. For years and years he has borne calumny and misrepresentation from a public which utterly failed to understand him, and from certain exclusive coteries which *willfully* failed to do so.

People vilified him, and when he would not answer they searched the "Leaves of Grass" to find the ground of an accusation.

They said that he was a sensualist, taking no thought of the spiritual essence and spiritual needs of humanity. But they found written in "Leaves of Grass:"

> "I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the *Soul*,"

and that throughout the book the soul is celebrated equally with

the body, the mind equally with the heart, the spirit equally with the sense. They found it an essential part of the poet's work to so celebrate them, just as he celebrates the female equally with the male in depicting the perfect personality of man.

Then these people accused him of infidelity, although they read in his book that

> "A mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels."

Again they accused him of being a gross materialist, finding, doubtless, much beauty in external nature, but failing to recognize the power behind it all. He was a pantheist with vision blinded to the higher spiritual insight. But there, in the sixth section of the *Song of Myself*, stood that surpassingly lovely passage:

> "A child said, *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
> How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.
>
> "I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.
>
> "Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
> A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,
> Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say *Whose?*"

Literature contains no finer recognition of an "Eternal Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness," and let me say incidentally, no finer example of a delicate sense of verbal melody.

And so it has gone on; there has been a deal of howling and conventional shuddering—a deal of holding up the hands in shocked amazement—the dear people all the while forgetful of the fact that in reading Whitman they were looking into a clear mirror which showed them the reflection of *themselves*, and which didn't make them look prettier, simply because the mirror wasn't cracked.

And amid all the vituperation the poet has calmly said:

> "I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,
> I see that the elementary laws never apologize."

To-day there are signs that the vindication has come, and in the right way—from without. It has come from those compelled thereto by the working out of inexorable truth.

Speaking for Philadelphia, I am sure that whatever there is of a literary movement there tends more and more towards the ac-

ceptance of at least the fundamental principles and basic meaning of the "Leaves of Grass"—towards a recognition of the fact that all *true* things are beautiful to him who sees aright.

You of Camden can claim Walt Whitman for your own, but you must let us of the bigger town across the river have a share in him because we are now beginning to deserve it.

Such a gathering as this is a pleasant sign of the times. We feel that in striving to honor Walt Whitman we are doubly honoring ourselves, and we know with all the certainty of a fixed conviction that his fame will rest securely on that high plane achieved by his utterance of a great message.

JOHN HERBERT CLIFFORD: GERMANTOWN.

PROPHET AND BARD.

Isaac Taylor, now thirty years dead, wrote: "Human nature utters itself with passion; but yet it is not a false utterance; it is a true though an impetuous vaticination." For vaticination we say, prophecy, but no more to tell the god's-will, nor the particular future. The word points straight through all localisms to universal meanings.

And prophet here and now means to us a voice of human nature, passionate and true; and of the universal soul, not echo of tribal god for peculiar people. Oracles are dumb. Hebrew line, grand in its day, spokesmen all of positive faiths, grow faint when speaks the Universe by the mouth of its holy prophet.

Great lispings there were, articulations worthy the man-child's dream of his coming stature. All must be gathered up into the vaster music of a race larger grown.

We claim no single or pre-eminent voice. All the world is witness. But the greatening spiritual content brings its able utterers.

Sit we not here with one of these? In the volume of the Book it is written, and in the volume of the faithful years: *Leaves of Grass* immortal with thought; Leaves of Life as deathless in the days, *Specimen Days* of the living and the loving soul. Green be his *November Boughs!* No *Sands at Seventy* can sterilize this soil. No carping unfastens the *Collect* of Comrades and Brotherhood Bond of Man.

Not much yet in "Familiar Quotations," Whitman is quoted, familiar in the plagiary's euphemism—"unconscious absorption." When gatherers shall come with bees' instinct for flowers, anthologies will bloom with his name.

No seven cities war to claim his birth, though seven hundred deny the bread of just fame. Happy that one city of title undisputed!

For not much longer can his credentials be questioned. Do you hear some still asking: "*Is* he a poet?" Bring Charles Lamb's candle, and look at their heads! Wide consent may be withheld, until his crown is on. And some recoil is claimed from early recognitions. The son of Emerson, in a little book about his father, plants a foot-note of disparagement, based upon alleged confessions of the Concord sage, who found *Leaves of Grass* "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed," and greeted its author "at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere for such a start." This, it would seem, Emerson inclined to take back, disappointed of his expectations. But what he had written he had written. Retraction were self-recoil, no more. For Emerson no word but reverence here. Yet, alas! for prophet's faithfulness to prophet! Whitman too coarse for the expounder of Montaigne and Shakspere and Goethe! But the fatal sentence is that "this catalogue style of poetry is easy and leads nowhere." But are there not other catalogues in poetry? In the *Iliad* some of various outfits for limited operations, though they do lead *somewhere*. Is it the rub that Whitman's catalogues lead *everywhere?* Perhaps it is at the catalogues that old Homer nods. If so, shall not other Homers nod—and their readers as well? But does our poet look a nodder? Gaze not at him here, but in that Morse head of him see if there be not rather the countenance of an elder god, with eyes that look straight on and never wink.*

Transcender of Transcendentalists! German, English, New England Transcendentalism? Deportations of a spirit to high exile of the chosen "cult," sending back, too radiant for common eyes, celestial visions.

Archbishop Whately religiously placed Emerson in the "magic-lanthorn school" of writers, their object, as they themselves might confess, "merely to elevate and surprise." Blind enough, yet dimly hinting want of a completing practical power in Ideal Philosophy to seize and hold man's actual life. In Emerson that power appears, spite of infinite refinements, yet needing mediators for the multitude. But Whitman should be his own mediator, even to runners who read. Those very catalogues are hooks that fasten him to life. Altogether transcendental, he is not less immediate to men. Thoughts to lift

* See frontispiece.

them, sympathy to comfort, brother-love to cheer—he gives all these.

Samuel Johnson, of Salem, whose Transcendentalism held all science and practical ethics, drew Theodore Parker—Transcendentalism's great warrior-saint—with "the wise head of Socrates and the warm, loving heart of Robert Burns." Lend this likeness to our poet; is it not as fit? His philosophy comes down from the heaven of select souls to grasp the hand of Man the Democrat. His dreams refresh men from their toil. They turn drudgery to song. Serenest, sanest optimism, that reckons with ugliness and ills! What believing of men already here, what heralding of better men to come! Complete American, pictured in the Book; prefigured, as in Lincoln's character, chanted in his requiem, with grandeur and tenderness sung; and in the American soldier, fortunate to die and be in proud remembrance here. And not alone the finished American: he sings the Perfect Man; knows him "the adding up of works."

Is not here some first shaping of the Epic of Humanity, hitherto writ but in fragments of time and place, broken tales "of love and woe," one day to be written full, written as lived by man? Dante and Danton, the Sayer and the Doer, Heaven and Hell and Earth, the Past, the Present, the Future, Revolution, Evolution—all shall be in its mighty sweep.

The poet who takes Idealism down into the doing of that greatest reverence of Goethe's—of Jesus', too, and Paul's, and Fourier's, and John Brown's—reverence for the lives below, is needed to carry man out to the Universe and up to God. For he does not fear to say, God. Voltaire said that if God did not exist, man must invent him. And some who say not God do say almost as good, say what is better than any invented god. Our poet teaches what Thoreau prayed: "May I love and revere myself above all the gods that man has ever invented." Old concern to take care of God goes with modern prompting to care for man. Take care of man, and God will take care of himself—and of men's substitutes for him. Whitman's God is cosmic. The daring poet who sings *himself* a cosmos has not far to seek his God, nor lacks for equal mind to celebrate the gifts of life and death.

Fulfiller for his part is he of the poetic past and continuator to the future of

> "Olympian bards who sung
> Divine ideas below,
> Which always find us young,
> And always keep us so."

I heard that one of Whitman's contemporaries, himself a grave writer, and sometimes morose, found our poet too serious. I knew a young fellow of wild genius who one day waylaid Carlyle in his walk and soon had him dismissing philosophers each to his own place. Hegel he doomed for heaviness. But my youth replied: "You could hardly expect Atlas, with the world on his shoulders, to dance a jig."

And our Atlas-poet, with cosmos in his brain, must needs leave sportive moods to humorists! Yet are not all humors there, veining his world with "infinite variety"?

"After reading Hegel" Whitman wrote:

"Roaming in thought over the Universe, I saw the little that is Good steadily hastening towards immortality,
And the vast all that is called Evil I saw hastening to merge itself and become lost and dead."

Yes, serious that, and high. So is he in all, above suspicion of obscene or impure; and they who tax him with such offense bring their defilement with them. He has, no doubt, the faults of his own qualities; he cannot be smirched with theirs.

So serious and great I deem it no extravagance to think our prophet-bard, that Carlyle's praise of the Book of Job might well be given to his:

"One of the grandest things ever written with a pen. . . . Such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. . . . All men's Book! . . . Grand in its sincerity, its simplicity, in its epic melody and repose of reconcilement. . . . True insight and vision for all things, material things no less than spiritual. . . . Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation, oldest choral melody,soft as the heart of mankind, so soft and great, as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars."

No singer of times and clans, of courts and games, and loves and wars of places, he is Prophet of Universal Life and Bard of the Cosmic Epos. He gives new words to the dictionary, new darings and achievement to literature. Single-handed hero in the peaceful war, how calmly he abides the issue, repelling blows with benedictions and treacheries with child-like trust. Homer perhaps is many; and Shakspere—who knows? But here indubitably is one. And, like Wisdom of old, remaining in himself, he maketh all things new. What frets and jars in the world of letters are soothed to calm in the all-accepting bosom of his cheerful faith! No come-outer, jealous of other come-outers,

lest they be frightfuller than himself; not one of Hawthorne's come-outers, eating no solid food, but living on the scent of other people's cookery; not come-outer at all, because never gone in. What are little systems to the Seer of All?

We love Emerson, "an iconoclast without a hammer." We love also the right iconoclast with his hammer, the very hammer of Thor, for idol-mountains which its smiting alone can bring down. Every prophet and reformer is his own species, like the schoolmen's angel. But was ever hammer as heavy, with blows as strong as Whitman's, so noiselessly swung, like God's greatest weights upon their smallest wires? Luther, Cromwell, Parker, Garrison and sturdy smiters still bringing down the strongholds of superstition and wrong—how their mighty strokes resound! But see this valiant striker break the prison walls of Custom and Error, all silently opening man's soul to the day!

Some five and forty years ago Elizabeth Barrett wrote to a New England friend: "We have one Shakspere between us—your land and ours—and one Milton. And now we are waiting for you to give us another." But why another Shakspere or Milton? One of a kind will do. We indeed give you another poet, but he is his own kind—*sui generis*—not for one land, nor two, but for all the lands and times.

Lesser bards have waited their centuries to be known. And he can wait—if the centuries can wait for him.

"Cast forth thy word into the ever-living, ever-working universe; it is a seed-grain that cannot die; unnoticed to-day, it will be found flourishing afte. a thousand years."

This of another seer is likewise our poet's faith. Well has he kept it, and nobly leaves it to mankind.

"All, all for immortality,
Love like the light silently wrapping all,
Nature's amelioration blessing all,
The blossoms, fruits of ages, orchards divine and certain,
Forms, objects, growths, humanities, to spiritual images ripening.

"Give me O God to sing that thought,
Give me, give him or her I love this quenchless faith,
In Thy ensemble, whatever else withheld, withhold not from us,
Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space,
Health, peace, salvation universal."

CHARLES G. GARRISON: CAMDEN.

LAW—NATURAL AND CONVENTIONAL.

Into the structure of the temple of immortality two widely different forms of genius enter. There is the genius of the architect, which embodies material elements so as to express in lasting form a single individuality—a kind of genius which lacks growth and is without vitality. Then there are the material elements themselves, materials brought to the temple, but not made of man, having their origin in natural laws, growing stratum upon stratum, like all growths. Between these two types there is an essential distinction. The genius of the architect is fixed, cribbed and confined, while the material elements of which the building is framed are capable of other and indefinite uses. This latter is the type of mind of which all "world-books" are formed. Among the classic dramatists Euripides and Sophocles furnished such types; Homer and Virgil among the epic poets; in philosophy, Plato; in poetry, the Hebrew scriptures; in later times, Goethe. It is of this type of mind that Carlyle speaks when he exclaims of Shakspere:

"Oh, this myriad-minded man!"

But, Mr. President, it is rare, within the lifetime of the furnisher of such material to the world, that those about discover in him this immortal quality. To our guest this rare distinction must be accorded, that his contemporaries see in him the myriad-mindedness of genius.

If, however, there be one thing which would be denied to him, even by those who speak sincerely and lovingly, it would be the possession of any correct notion of *Law*. If I mistake not, he has been spoken of as "Walt, the lawless."

Law includes such diverse ideas. We have the idea of a legislative enactment. That is one notion of Law. Then there are "social laws," as we call them, which undertake to regulate all our private affairs for us, even our morals. And then there is another idea of Law which lies deeper than these, viz.: that immutable condition of things to which—whether we recognize it or not, whether we will or not—all things that are true must conform, and of which, strange to say, the least possible account is taken in dealing with the other two. Thus it happens that there has always been a conflict between the two concrete notions

of Law and this one great and true idea. The history of every philosophy, of every race, of every religion, is nothing more, or but little more, than the history of the warfare between these two notions of the Law, the onward spirit of humanity always deciding for the true ideal. Hastily suggested, is the attitude of Socrates in such a warfare, who still lives as the vital instinct of the philosophy of Plato; of Gautama, to-day the great Buddha of three hundred millions of his fellow-men; of a certain young rabbi on the shores of Galilee, whose spirit has entered into all modern civilization. All these are exemplars of this warfare in which the true and fundamental law opposed, for the time being, the other lesser laws. What is chiefly to be noticed in all great spiritual movements is that while they fought against laws they fought toward Law.

Humbly, then, should we reproach any great mind with the idea of its lawlessness. It is the special province of genius to see where the true law lies. Rightly understood the spirit of genius is never lawless. Rather would it befit us, in view of the transcendent vision of genius, to question humbly our own faculties, or seek for what may aid our sight toward the distant worlds he sees, before we deem in our hearts that he is gazing into vacant air.

But our poet has nothing to say about these warfares of ideas in the great philosophic or religious systems. His words are not addressed to nations; not to senates; not to the municipal divisions into which people divide themselves. He speaks but to man, of whom philosophers have always delighted to speak as a little world—a "Microcosm," they call him. And what is the word that Whitman brings to him? What does he say to him when man knows not by which of the arbitrary laws about him he ought to guide his life? I refer not to legislative or civil laws. I mean those forces which are brought to bear on the life of man, socially, ethically. Books, creeds and next door neighbors tell him to do this or to do that, or he shall be condemned. In crises of his life he finds these rules fall away from him, or he outgrows them; he knows not how to test them. When weighed in the balance they are found wanting in spiritual truth. Then comes the spirit which pervades every line of Whitman and bids each man cherish himself as the temple of truth, and he will know where to find it.

Whitman teaches, above all else, that man has within himself that element of the divine which is capable of placing him in unison with nature and beauty, and at one with his fellow-men. In the language of St. Paul, he bids men remember that they are "sons of God" in the sense that they have within them the god-

like spirit which alone is capable of indefinite growth and expansion. "Nothing from without, everything from within," is his motto.

All the criticism that can be heaped upon Whitman for deifying the temple of the body is explained by the idea that it is to him the tabernacle of that spirit of truth which he would have all whom he loves so dearly look upon as a divine heritage, that they may make the spirit and the temple which encloses it worthy each of the other.

The teaching of Whitman is embodied in the words of that other myriad-minded poet who says,

> "To thine own self be true,
> And it must follow as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man."

E. A. ARMSTRONG: CAMDEN.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY.

. . . . . It seems to me that New Jersey is the State in which Walt Whitman ought to live. How many are the jibes, and the sneers, and the slurs that New Jersey has received by would-be wits and philosophers! Serenely she has taken them all, conscious that one day justification would come and that appreciation would follow. That day has arrived. Walt Whitman has never complained because he has been unjustly condemned. Walt Whitman has never said an unkind word in answer to all the unfair, and unjust, and unrighteous criticisms that were hurled at him. New Jersey, therefore, is proud of Walt Whitman; and although it was not his fortune to be born within her borders, we know that Walt Whitman is proud of New Jersey. "A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind," and we who are native-born Jerseymen, we who love our soil, and love our State, and love all our surroundings, sir, have learned in the years in which you have lived with us to love you; and we, your fellow-citizens, and your fellow-State inhabitants, greet you here to-day, and say to you, "May the years that have passed bring you in many years yet to come rich fruits and rich returns." . . . . I am glad to extend to Walt Whitman, on behalf of all the people of New Jersey, the warmest congratulations upon the completion of the seventieth year of his life, and I know that every loyal Jersey heart will join with me

in wishing a continuance by many years of that life, with its illustration and example of true manhood, true fellowship, true democracy, and its evidence of human love, and all will join with me in a hearty "amen" when I say, "May those years be long measured out to the people of the country."

RICHARD WATSON GILDER: New York.

LITERATURE.

I have heard the murmured protests of my friend as praise has been added to praise, but I don't know what we are going to do unless we praise Walt Whitman to-night. There was a little hint communicated that possibly it might be agreeable to you and to our guest that I should say something about American literature, but you will be happy to know that I have positively refused. I do not think you are greatly interested in literature outside of Camden to-night, and I think that my best introduction would be to say that I was born not far from Camden, and I am here to welcome Walt Whitman as myself a born Jerseyman. He thought I was going to give you an encyclopedia of American literature, and he said to me that he did not want me to omit Cooper, Bryant, Emerson, and Whittier—so they are not omitted. In our thoughts to-night no great names in American literature are omitted, and bright among them shines the name of Walt Whitman.

But, gentlemen, it is a satisfaction to be here, also, as a literary man, as a very busy though humble worker in literary fields. You have heard Mr. Whitman praised as a man, as a good man, as a patriot and all that, but you know perfectly well that you would have heard very little praise of Mr. Whitman if he had not been a literary man. He is a poet, thank God! and you people of Camden and Philadelphia are honoring yourselves most highly in giving this unusual tribute, this neighborhood tribute, to the living poet.

Our friend, Judge Garrison, has spoken to-night of two kinds of contributions to literature—the literature of substance, and the literature of form. I am a stickler for form in literature, and one thing that I admire in Walt Whitman is his magnificent form. It is one of the most remarkable things in all literature and one of the most individual. In its kind, and at its best, it is unapproachable. No one can imitate with success Whitman's peculiar style; those who have tried—men, women and boys—have all failed. No one can do it but Walt Whitman. At the same

time the substance of Whitman's poetry pours freely into any language and carries its flood of meaning and of passion into whatever language it flows.

I remember well the first great impression I ever had of Whitman's poetry. It was received in reading a review of it in a French magazine many years ago, not a great while after the war. I had seen a great deal of our war as a boy, as the son of a soldier living in camp with the army of the Potomac, and as a soldier myself for a short time. I had seen people shot, and I had seen a good deal of the hospitals during the late war; and as a reporter for a Jersey paper up here in Newark, I had travelled with the funeral of Abraham Lincoln. The only time I ever saw Lincoln was his dead face in Independence Hall over across the river. It was near midnight—a policeman let me in after the crowd had passed through—and I climbed up those steps through the window and came down suddenly upon that still, immortal face. Then I walked alone up to the railroad station, which was in the northern end of the town. As I walked I heard the band coming up behind me, and then the body arrived, and we were all awake throughout the night, and we saw the faces of myriads turned with tears upon the funeral train—faces of men, women and children—all the way to Newark, where I got off and wrote my report.

Yes, I saw a great deal of the war, but I have read nothing about the war that carries its volume of feeling, its enthusiasm, its pathos, its picturesqueness, as does the poetry of Walt Whitman. As I say, my first impression of that was received from a review written in another language. Not long ago another Frenchman took up Whitman's war poetry again, and poured it out for his readers, and I got hold of it again, and again I was shaken like a reed in the wind. There is nothing like it. There is no description of war in verse like it, certainly not in our language.

I was asked to be impromptu, to-night, but my impromptu has been a great deal spoiled by the previous impromptus. I wanted to say something very fresh and impressive on the line of our friend here, about Walt Whitman's appreciation of the duality of existence. Those who look through his poetry like Dr. Johnson's old woman, for the naughty words, and who really know nothing about it, think that he is a poet only of one phase of life; but where outside of the Bible is there a stronger sense of the spirit? where is there a stronger passion for immortality? a stronger vision of the individuality of the soul, the quenchless human soul? It is because he covers both the flesh and the spirit, that Whitman reaches some of the loftiest minds

of our day. He has not yet penetrated to the masses, but he will in years to come through the finer intellects of the time. *They* will interpret him because they feel most keenly his literary form; they feel most keenly his subtleties, the beauties of his thought and of his language.

Gentlemen, in New York we are building an arch to commemorate our Washington Centennial. There is a great deal of public spirit in that town of ours, and we are trying to concentrate it now upon a most beautiful and fitting memorial of the late Centennial celebration. One feature of the arch is that it is to be built not only by the rich but by the poor, by the children with their pennies and by the millionaires with their thousands. And in the corner-stone we are going to put the names of all those people. We shall probably put there other records of the time. We shall put there some description of the Centennial; perhaps, the names of our President, Governor, Mayor, and—Common Council! We will put there a very beautiful medal by Saint Gaudens, which our committee had the honor to send forth. And some thousands of years from now, when civilization moves onward—northward, perhaps, around the Pole—somebody will come there and, under the ruins, will find a record of the New York of these times.

Place Walt Whitman's poetry in the corner-stone of this nation, let some convulsion of Nature overthrow these United States, and then let that poetry be found; and from the lines will rise up a picture of our times, such, I believe, as nowhere else can be found.

JULIAN HAWTHORNE: Scotch Plains, N. J.

DEPUTY OF NATURE.

The short shift in the matter of notice given me for this call is offset by the belief that this is one of those rare occasions on which the frank giving-out of hearty feeling has as much a place as premeditated eloquence; and the reason, as I need not tell you, is, that Walt Whitman sits here as the deputy of nature, her embassador accredited and approved. I have always thought of Walt Whitman less as an individual man than as a gospel. Praise of him is praise of humanity, and personal vanity is as alien from him as from Mt. Washington or the Mississippi. His books show us that no one better than he has loved his fellow-man, and yet we feel that the qualities in us which he finds most lovable are not the petty personal ones, but those which belong to the race. Take, for example, his friend-

ship for the greatest man of our generation, Abraham Lincoln. Great as was his personal love for Lincoln, I question if his highest affection and deepest reverence were not paid rather to the voice and hand of a destiny mightier than Lincoln's speaking and acting through him to national ends, and because he recognized in Lincoln the heart and brain of a people working and planning through him the union and freedom of their country. It was for this and for no lesser reason that he was able to hail Lincoln as "My Captain." And then again, to show the breadth of the man, take at the other end of the scale his lines "To a Common Prostitute." He entered into no question of untoward circumstances, nor into any gradations of sin—original, hereditary or personal—but he saw her standing there as she has stood through history, the victim of man, and his Nemesis; and as such he, as a man, accepted her. He saw that our universal mother Nature lavished upon her, as upon the most immaculate of her sisters, the warmth of the sun, the freshness of the rain, the perfume of the flowers and the rustling of the leaves, and he said to her,

"Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you."

It was a great saying, and the world must sooner or later give heed to it; and surely, the man and poet whose sympathy can extend from the highest specimen of our times to the lowest nameless outcast, is worthy of more than all the sympathy and honor that we contain.

HAMLIN GARLAND: Jamaica Plain, Mass.

THE TEACHER.

It seems peculiarly fitting to me at this time that a personal acknowledgment should be made of the debt that we owe to our great democratic poet. In making this for myself, I am perfectly sure that I am representative of a large and increasing group of men and women both here and abroad.

Walt Whitman has taught me many great and searching truths, but in the press there are two lifts of thought and feeling which rise so high they catch the eternal sunshine. These are, Optimism and Altruism—Hope for the future and Sympathy toward men. If I am right in the belief that I am a representative recipient, then I am right in saying that if Whitman had done no more than teach these great emotions—and live them in his

life, which is better—he would be worthy of all the honor we can give him. For Walt Whitman's optimism is not the blind optimism of ignorant youth, but the jubilant flight of the stern-eyed poet, vaulting like the eagle over darkness and storms. He sees and has seen the failures, abortions, vices and diseases of our social life, and yet his sublime optimism spreads wing over them all.

He has the passion of hope. As his religion has no hell, so his philosophy knows no despair. No matter how greed and avarice may shout and thunder along their granite grooves—no matter how thick the miasmatic mist of bribery may rise from our political cess-pools—his tumultuous and optimistic song rises above it all on level, jocund wing.

He caught long ago the deepest principle of evolution, of progress, which is, that the infinite past portends and prefigures the infinite future; that each age is the child of the past and the parent of the future; that nothing happens, that everything is caused; and that no age could conceivably have been other than it was. This enables him to sing:

> "What will be will be well, for what is is well. . . . .
> Pleasantly and well-suited I walk,
> Whither I walk I cannot define, but I know it is good,
> The whole universe indicates that it is good,
> The past and the present indicate that it is good. . . . .
> And henceforth I will go celebrate anything I see or am,
> And sing and laugh and deny nothing."

This steadfast and superb faith in the universe the most exhaustive knowledge of evil has not shaken. Age, suffering, neglect, misprision, have not had power to prevail over it. This is one of the great lessons of our great poet-seer.

The other great lesson which he has taught us is, the passion of sympathy—the great lesson which the ages have so slowly learned—the passion which a militant age trod under foot, but which in this new and peaceful era is to be the one consummate resplendent flower of a new and more glorious chivalry.

Walt Whitman is an absolute democrat. He knows no line of color, race or class. There is no nature so dwarfed and darkened, that he has not sung of its need, saying, "This is a human soul and a brother; which of you are ready to condemn it?" Impartial as the sun which shines, generous as the ocean, his sympathy embraces all. This passion during the civil war sent him, amid the horrible hospital scenes, to the heroic duties which struck him down in his middle prime of life. Greater love hath no man than this: he laid down his life for strangers. He could not fight men, but he could fight disease

and face death with calm eyes. The value of this life and teaching is inconceivably great.

We have substantially passed the age of militarism, but we are engaged in an industrial war. Strife and heartless cruelty still survive, but in other forms. Brotherhood and peace are still far-off blessed dreams, and the need of great teachers of sympathy and hope is pressing indeed. Let us give thanks to the day that added one more teacher of hope and sympathy. Let us take courage of the fact that out of a day of dollars, out of a din of selfish trade, out of the surf-like roar of material progress, such a singer, with such a message, was born, and that he has gained at last the respectful ear of his age and time.

I have purposely left out of my tribute any reference to Walt Whitman's poetry as poetry, because I knew that others would efficiently touch upon that phase of his work. I am satisfied, moreover, that the American people must first know him as a man—must know the great patient heart and life of Walt Whitman—before they will understand his stupendous books. It is our duty, we who know him, to tell his countrymen of his simplicity, grandeur and blamelessness of life, thus hastening the time when he will be known for what he is—the strongest, most electric, most original of modern poets.

In conclusion, let me say how much pleasure it gives me to take part in such a gathering as this. Praise too often builds monuments when it should build houses—raises tombs when it should have warmed hearts. Too often we neglect the living man and honor the dead poet. Praise for the hearing ear, I say —flowers of love for the throbbing sense—of the living man! I present my wreath of praise—drop my bit of laurel into the still warm, firm hand of the singer, Walt Whitman, victorious at seventy!

HENRY L. BONSALL: CAMDEN.

"A CHILD OF ADAM"—Revised and Improved.

After a Supreme Justice has captured our Garrison and invoked the art of the *Century's* Gilder in the weaving of a Garland of Hawthorne blossoms to bedeck the brow of our Chief—when the bench, the bar, the publicist, poet and preacher have each and all so unreservedly given testimony to the faith within them—when the grand jurors have made their presentment —what remains for one of the petit panel save to give in a plain, unvarnished manner some of the simpler impressions drawn, not from the concensus of opinion in this symposium, but gleaned

in contact with the person, and in something more than a cursory contemplation of his work?

Walt Whitman has ever been to me a large and luminous presence, a pervading and persuasive personality. His work will stand for what it is worth,—and that it has grown to be thought of incontestable, and, to a largely increasing number, of inestimable value, this wonderfully representative gathering of many of the masters in art, literature, science and philosophy, abundantly attests. Aside from his great work, however, a great man attracts and rivets attention. Great in his simplicity, his naturalness transcends and triumphs over the pomp and circumstance surrounding so many other illustrious names. Our friend Gilchrist has told us of the esteem in which Whitman is held in Great Britain, and, indeed, if he cannot consistently claim the merit of discovery, he at least makes a good case in showing that he speaks for a number of the distinguished *literati* of his realm in promoting a literary rennaissance which, but for them, might have awaited a later period for its full germination and development, and this while Whitman lived obscurely in the town which now does him so much honor. We acknowledge the debt, and appreciate the duty and devotion to a high ideal which made the message from our Friends Across the Seas possible. We can only retort in kind, that if we are not the original discoverers of British genius, the inspired authors of Albion have a greater host of admirers here than at home. In deference to the legal lights around me, I might have said "clientage," but as, in the absence of copyright, we are accused of stealing our foreign literary ware, perhaps our appreciation is not as substantial as our friends would have it. Still, we are not altogether parasitic, sucking the sap without imparting anything to the vitality of the parent tree. However true it might once have been that American books were not read, or that there were few or none to be read, we have swelled the volume and improved the quality of literature amazingly of later years. We have given the world, and especially the English-speaking race, many "names that were not born to die," and among them, we are glad to have the testimony of our eminent artist-guest, that, in the estimation of his critical countrymen, that of Whitman, like Leigh Hunt's lover of his fellow-men, leads all the rest.

I have never searched for a clue to Whitman's popularity in the old world or the new. To me it has seemed manifest. Those who know the work know the man. Those who know the man cannot fail to absorb the work. There is nothing magniloquent or meretricious, no gilt nor gewgaws about him. He must have been born at a time when Nature, disgusted with the manner in

which much of her handiwork had been marred by the artificial barriers to wholesome growth set up by stinted standards and stilted schoolmen, made the "effort" recommended to Mrs. Dombey, and gave us a creation that needed no betterment and could sustain no detriment. Hence his serene placidity when others are bothered about themselves or their neighbors, the little things of their little world, or the bigger things of the bigger world, which cursed spite ordained that they should set aright. He never quarrels with what is, and doesn't lie awake o' nights bothering over what is or is not to be. He knows his place (oh, rare knowledge!) in the universal plan, and fits into his niche as nicely and naturally as though born in it instead of growing into it. It is this absence of posing and prudery, this avoidance of parade, that makes Walt Whitman so lovable. It is the connecting link with our common humanity that makes the Olympian Jove our brother, and gods and mortals of the same essence. This it was that induced the colored cook to rush out and be the first to greet our guest this evening, and this it is that makes the day laborer feel that, without abatement of reverence, he may accost him familiarly. This "human critter," as Whitman calls it, as exemplified in himself, simplifies what, with arrogant assumption, would otherwise appear complex and confusing. His character, as said, is the key to his work, and "Whoso speaketh with," and understandeth "the right voice," is already in communion, even though as widely separated "anywhere about the earth" as the moon from the tides. He who comes properly accredited with a sound mind in a sound body, divested of pretence and pedantry, can breathe in great draughts of space with him on the Open Road. It is this quality of comradeship with those who have no other letters patent than their own nobility of character that opens up through our anti-feudal philosopher a Democratic Vista heretofore closed through exclusive exactions, or only to be peered at, in the enchantment lent by distance. To him, in accord with the laws of their environment, Cuffee is as worthy of consideration as the President. In the halls of authority he is not awed. In the presence of calamity he sobs, as a child, "Oh my Captain—my Father!" Closing the eyes of so many in their last sleep, the grim messenger to others bears to him only healing on its wings. The scent of the bloom in lilac time is no simpler than the song of the mystic voices in the redwood tree, or the plaint of the bird for its mate. Like Donatello, who saw and heard in Nature sights and sounds that others knew not, his soul, true to itself and its kind, garners and gives forth secrets not taught in the schools, and to such a soul the closing scene can only offer

that "Light" which Goethe, dying, vainly prayed for, his metaphysics and mysticism offering no clue to the Beyond.

LINCOLN L. EYRE: PHILADELPHIA.

THE DEMOCRAT.

This occasion is more than a personal tribute. It is a plain step forward in the instincts of the American people. After a century of banquets to politicians and commercial personages, it is more than gratifying to find even a handful of Americans willing to do special honor to the fittest representative of their indigenous literature.

Whitman stands for what is best in American life. He is not only greater than the world yet knows, but greater than he himself will ever know. His personality—the atmosphere that envelops him, like a white cloud about some mountain peak—is more majestic than anything he has yet written. "Walt," says he, "you contain enough, why don't you let it out then?" No, not in a score of lifetimes! "I knew," said Iole, "that Hercules was a god the moment my eyes fell on him. When I beheld Theseus, I desired that I might see him offer battle, or at least guide his horses in the chariot-race; but Hercules did not wait for a contest; he conquered whether he stood or walked, or sat, or whatever thing he did." Such did Walt Whitman appear to my eyes to-night, at the threshold of yonder door, godlike and childlike, as with one characteristic sweep of the arm he raised his hat above his head, greeting us with dignified familiarity, a splendid symbol of the all-conquering spirit of democracy.

Whitman's democracy is the foundation upon which will rest his most enduring fame. To-day we cannot put ourselves in touch with this, the most intricate riddle ever given to man. It eludes us. Huge and towering, it confronts us—another Gaurisankar, unclimbed yet. First came the revolutionary period; a struggle of colonies (rather than men) for freedom. Then there was an injection of bastard democracy from France. Then began the long struggle for commercial independence; then the longer struggle for the emancipation of slaves. During what period, out of those tumultuous years, did the American people, setting other issues aside, devote themselves to a serious and systematic study of democracy as a political science?

The delusion now filling the general mind with the flattering belief that we have gloriously worked out a task, which in reality we have not yet begun, is appalling. It has bred, as an inevi-

table result, the democracy that flourishes like a rank weed in these treacherously peaceful times. It has nourished a democracy that reeks with the foulest instincts and purposes, confounding low breeding with humble birth, trampling upon the gentleman and ennobling the blackguard. But the gentleman will not slap the pick-pocket on the back and play the political harlot to gain his favor. So he must stand aside and hold to his virtue, and see the degradation of a people who cannot influence their scurvy politicians, even to the building of a sewer or the cleaning of a street; who can rule themselves in nothing. They can come together at a crisis, in a sort of town meeting, to patch up their long neglected affairs. Is this democracy? Is this a guarantee of the lasting qualities of free institutions? On the contrary, we are rapidly developing a crisis which will take the shape of a cataclysm as radical as it will be tremendous; a conflict likely to be made up of elements absolutely novel and surprising, and that will shake the structure of this government to its deepest foundations.

Then will come into play, for the first time, the marvellous genius of the poet who sang the "Song of Myself" and "By Blue Ontario's Shore." Like a fertile land unexpectedly revealed out of a receding sea, the whole broad territory of Whitman's faith will startle an awakening world to a new conception of his promise and his meaning. Then our children will clearly see what we could but faintly discern, that when he cries for comradeship with the lowliest man or thing he chants the true democracy. His song is a triumphant symphony in defense of nature. All human conventions must bend the knee. A leaf of grass is loftier than a cathedral. The citizen who would be free must find all life within himself, "must rule the empire of himself, being himself alone." America, if she would endure, must welcome the self-confidence rather than the self-abandonment of her people. Welcome to thee, at the appointed time, O true republic! Welcome then, and not till then, democracy! Whitman, the mortal, outstripping thee by a hundred years, moves with contented spirit toward the ivory gate, ready to sink into the arms of nature, as a child falls to sleep upon its mother's breast. Whitman, the immortal, awaits thy coming.

LETTERS

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[From an article by EDWARD BERTZ, in the "Deutsche Presse, Organ des Deutschen Schriftsteller-Verbandes," Berlin, June 2, 1889.]

Walt Whitman was born May 31, 1819, *at West Hills, on Long Island, in the State of New York, and we now celebrate his finishing his seventieth year. A paralytic stroke broke down his former robust constitution many years ago, but through all sufferings he has preserved a calm, cheerful soul, while his mind has conserved its youthful freshness. What he wrote appears in two volumes—his poems in "Leaves of Grass," and his prose in "Specimen Days and Collect." . . . This is merely a commemoration of his jubilee. If these lines should reach him across the sea, they may express the wish to our august friend that the love he devoted to the hundred thousand wounded and sick soldiers, North and South, during three years of war, on the fields and in hospitals, may be partially reciprocated by devoted friends in his age and affliction. Love is the foundation of his poetry, and will as surely continue to bear its fruit during ensuing centuries as other great ideas have done heretofore; while from our half-barbaric civilization his own consoling words will sweetly compel the hearing of future generations:*

"Over the carnage rose prophetic a voice,
Be not dishearten'd, affection shall solve the problems of freedom yet,
Those who love each other shall become invincible,
They shall yet make Columbia victorious."

LETTERS.

HALLAM TENNYSON—*from his father, Lord Tennyson: (To H. H. Gilchrist): Farringford, Freshwater, Isle of Wight, June* 22, 1889.

My father has been yachting in the Sunbeam. He thanks you for your letter: he is not up to writing.

Your banquet and speech seem to have been a great success. All congratulations.

WILLIAM M. ROSSETTI: 5 *Endsleigh Gardens, London, N. W., England, June* 7, 1889.

I am obliged for your letter of 24 May, enclosing a programme of the "Whitman Testimonial," or dinner in honor of Walt Whitman, which was fixed for 31 May, the seventieth anniversary of his birth; and inviting me to send "some expression touching the season and the man."

I will only say that I most heartily sympathize in any demonstration of honor and love towards this great and good American —a man who, whilst specially and personally American in all his feelings, thoughts and utterances, has, beyond almost all men in literature, gone down to the roots of the human heart, and spoken the word for all the world. I myself always have honored and loved him, and always shall do so. I consider him to be pre-eminent among the sons of men for a large human nature—broad, deep and glowing—and for the power of giving the deepest and most universal expression to the deepest and most universal feelings. With heart and with mind he embraces more than other men do, and with voice he proclaims more. This is, I think, his great and admirable excellence as writer or poet; and is quite enough for numbering Whitman among the great poetic souls of the world—whatever may be his qualifications in point of form or of diction. On this matter—were I to express my exact opinion—I could say a good deal, partly to praise and

partly to demur: but it is a subordinate (tho' far from an unimportant) matter, and for the present I leave it alone.

Honor and love to Walt Whitman. This tribute is due from Americans, from Englishmen and from all races of men, be they the foremost or the backward races.

GABRIEL SARRAZIN: *Paris, France—(written from 67 George Street, Euston Road, London, N. W., England, June 12, 1889).*

Kindly excuse me for not earlier responding to the letter in which you announce the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of Walt Whitman's birth, in Camden. Your message found me in London, where I came to pass a month, and I would have wished to write you as soon as I received it; but my health is not always good, and sometimes does not permit me to do what I desire.

If I had been with you on the 31st of May last, this, in substance, is what I would have said in restatement of my views upon the works of the noble poet:

Walt Whitman is, in my opinion, one of the only two living beings—the other is Count Léon Tolstoi—to whom is applicable the name of *Apostle*. And, if I could permit myself to make a comparison between two men equally great, I would not hesitate to place Whitman one degree above Tolstoi. Notwithstanding the evangelical goodness of the latter, there is in him too much philosophical pessimism, and Whitman seems to have a wider and surer outlook. He is the only man who has absolutely *known* that Man is an indivisible fragment of the universal Divinity, that the heart of a man truly pious knows how to humble itself without appeal in the adoration of the Cosmos, and that instead of losing himself in useless dissertations on the greater or less superiority of this tradition or that religious confession or some other, a man would do much better to love and to serve truly his fellow-creatures: *that is the whole of Divinity*, because who loves his fellows loves God. This view, of which Whitman has been, in this era, *the practical apostle*—this view will renovate the world.

Such, dear sir, is what I would have said if I had been among you on the 31st of May last; and, then I would have lifted, in my turn, my glass, wishing very long life to the august old man, and assuring him of my love.

Please, dear sir, transmit to all the friends of Walt Whitman, in Camden, my sentiments of cordial sympathy; and believe me also very sincerely yours.

T. W. Rolleston: *Dublin, Ireland, June* 8, 1889.

You invite me to contribute a word of congratulation to the pamphlet which will commemorate Walt Whitman's attainment of his seventieth birthday. I wish the praise and thanks I give him were better worth having; but he at least does not value such things solely for the distinction of the giver. I rejoice to think that my name will be linked with other worthier ones, and with his, the worthiest of all, on this occasion. What I owe to him is among those best and largest things which are not to be defined in human speech. He it is who has rendered truly sweet and wholesome to me whatever else I have gained from life and literature.

What a triumph of faith and sincerity is denoted by this celebration! It is well that the memory of the wide world's greatest friend should be linked with proud and joyful thoughts, not with those of pity and indignation. This is the gain which a life prolonged beyond the completion of his appointed task has brought to the many who now love him, and the multitudes who will do so. Give him, from one of the former, my hearty good wishes and congratulations.

William Morris: *Kelmscott House, Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, England, June* 11, 1889.

I thank you for the opportunity you have given me to send my heartiest greetings to Walt Whitman; I have the greatest respect for a man who has shown himself at once so friendly and sympathetic, and so independent. I look upon him as one of those men who may be called the material for poetry; men without whom poetry would degenerate into a mere literary trick, insincere and empty, valueless to all who set a true value on life, as our friend does. Once again I beg you to give my greetings to Walt Whitman as to a personal friend, although I have never seen him.

Edward Dowden: *Dublin, Ireland, June* 3, 1889.

I rejoice greatly in the fact that at threescore years and ten Walt Whitman, in Camden, has "that which should accompany old age—honor, love, obedience, troops of friends." We who are far away have a fraternal feeling towards his American friends and neighbors who have a care and reverence for the Good Gray Poet.

During some twenty years I have watched with interest the growth of his fame (and "fame," Shelley tells us, is "love dis-

guised '') in England and in other countries of Europe. And now the obstacles have yielded, and there are wide roads of access to what is best in his work.

His elder years have rounded the work of his earlier manhood. His last volume shows him as the cheerful poet of old age, the cheerful poet of physical infirmity; while his earlier poems showed him especially as the poet of youth and lusty vitality. The later writings seem to me to reflect a beautiful light—clear and serene—on his previous work. And that light, we feel, comes from the man himself, whose whole bearing towards life—joys and sorrows, and evil repute and good repute, and sickness and health, and manhood and old age—and towards not life alone but also death, has been noble.

May you and we join in 1899 to celebrate his eightieth birthday! And may he bring us a few December Fagots then in succession to his "November Boughs"! I know they will give pleasant welcome, and will sparkle cheerily, however dark may be the days.

MARY WHITALL COSTELLOE: *London, England, June* 25, 1889.

I was away from home at the time your letter of May 25th came, and I have not been able to reply to it before. I regret the delay very much, ... as I should very much have liked to be included in the list of those who observed Mr. Whitman's birthday with respect and affectionate remembrance. But I fear I am altogether too late. . . . .

I think I have learned to appreciate Mr. Whitman's work better in the four years I have been living in England. I have seemed to myself to reach a fairer judgment of American tendencies and of the spirit of the American democracy, because I see them as compared with another civilization and a different set of political ideas. And I feel more sure now than I could have felt before, that Walt Whitman's poems are the perfect artistic reflection of his country. You cannot really understand America without Walt Whitman, without "Leaves of Grass": I should say, without America. He has expressed that civilization "up to date," as he would say, and no student of the philosophy of history can do without him. I am not surprised that the English are quicker to recognize this than Americans themselves, and I think it is a tribute to the fidelity of his work, for there is no task harder than to make people see themselves as they really are. England of the present day has no such exponent of her life and thought, nor do I know of any living writer, unless it be Ibsen, who has even made the effort to write the epic of his

country's civilization. And Ibsen, with his special doctrines, is very different from Walt Whitman's catholic acceptance and reproduction of all the tendencies, all the forces, at work in America.

Quite apart from its work as a teacher, as a "cheerer of men's hearts," "Leaves of Grass" is an imperishable artistic monument of the most complex and the most hopeful civilization in the world.

Personally, the privilege of knowing Walt Whitman has been always one of the greatest privileges of my life, and I can never cease to be grateful to him for his kindliness to me. It makes me very envious to think of you who can see him often! When you see him next, tell him, please, that I have said that a day never passes without our talking of him and wishing for his presence.

RUDOLF SCHMIDT: *Copenhagen, Denmark, June* 4, 1889.

I do not express myself with great ability in the English language, for which reason my "testimonial" in behalf of Walt Whitman must be very short. What I have to say about him as poet and thinker, I have laid down in a published essay, which perhaps more nearly exhausts its great theme than many other subsequent essays to the same purpose.

To me "Democratic Vistas" is the far-shining pinnacle of all that Walt Whitman has done. These few sheets represent a whole literature; they range their author among the great seers of all times.

These northern Scandinavian countries are perhaps the best field for such broad democratic views. Recently, a rector of a school in Slesorg wrote me that he had read my translation of "Democratic Vistas" again and again, he did not know how many times. "Nordslesorgsk Sondagsblad," the valiant champion of the Danish language as against the systematical Germanisation of an old Danish province, published in May a whole series of articles on Walt Whitman. The sturdy Slesvic peasants know him very well.

My deceased friend, Dr. Rosenberg, was among the antagonists of Walt Whitman. His son Magiste Tete Andreas Rosenberg, my favorite scholar, has lately written a hymn to Walt Whitman that was reprinted in the above-named weekly, and his little son is baptized *Walt.*

To me the fact includes a symbol! Of course I expect that you will communicate to Walt Whitman the tenor of this letter. It will, I hope, warm his old heart as a sunbeam. He has a right

to say "*Omen Accipio.*" To-day the genius of the future is greeting him.

EDWARD CARPENTER: *Millthorpe, near Chesterfield, England, May* 18, 1889.

Dear Walt:—I now send you on with loving remembrances and good wishes, our little contribution to the record of your birthday . . . from Bessie and Isabella Ford, William, Ethel and Arthur Thompson, and myself. . . . Glad that you notch another birthday among us—tho' I fear the time is often wearisome to you. The spring comes again with the cuckoo and the corncrake calling all day long, and the grass growing thick about our feet already (very early this year), and the trees all in leaf—the old vigor somewhere down, the perennial source which, even in extreme age, I guess people sometimes feel within them. I trust you have still good friends near you, and do not feel cut off from those that are remote. Ernest Rhys has just sent me some lines or verses of greeting to you—but perhaps he will send them himself. I heard from Bucke a fortnight ago telling me he had been with you.

I have just been weeding strawberries and come in to write you these few lines. All goes well with me. I am brown and hardy—and tho' I live mostly alone, have more friends almost than a man ought to have. Some kind of promise keeps floating to us always, luring us on. With much love to you, dear Walt, as always.

EDWARD CARPENTER: *London, England, June* 4, 1889.

Many thanks for your note. . . . We drink a health also here to the Good Poet, whom we do not forget—but think of him and love him just the same as ever.

JOHN HAY: *London, England, June* 18, 1889.

I deeply regret that I was absent from the country on the day of your testimonial to my dear and honored old friend, Walt Whitman, and that I was not informed of your intentions in time to join my expressions of affection and regard to those of his hosts of friends.

R. PEARSALL SMITH: *London, England, June* 4, 1889.

Yours of May 24th did not reach me in season to telegraph a message for the dinner of the 31st to Walt Whitman. I am sorry that I could not be present with his other friends.

JOHN BURROUGHS: *West Park, N. Y., May* 30, 1889.

DEAR FRIENDS: I am with you in spirit on this occasion, if not in body. I should be with you in body also, but my body, these late years, is that of a farmer, reluctant to move, unused to festive halls and festive occasions, and mortgaged to a very exacting bit of land. But my heart is with you, and it is full of love for the glorious old poet whose seventieth birthday you have met to celebrate. There is no disguising the solicitude we have all felt about the state of his health the past year, and in view of this fact I think I may frankly congratulate you that you have come together to praise Cæsar and not to bury him.

It is a source of great joy to me that he has reached this mountain top of human years, not without weariness and a broken, faltering step the past decade, but with no abatement of his serenity, his hope, and the helpful cheer and courage of his spirit. Old age may be a valley leading down and down, as it has been so often depicted, but I always think of Walt Whitman as on the heights, and when I make my annual or semi-annual pilgrimage to visit him, I always find him on the heights—at least never in the valley of doubt and despond or of spiritual decrepitude—always tonic and uplifting. Does he look like a man of valleys and shadows? Does he not rather look like a man of the broad high table-lands, where his spirit has always travelled; or of the shore, where the primordial ocean has breathed upon him and moulded him? At any rate, the spirit which he has put into his poems is akin to these things, and goes with the largest types and the most healthful and robust activity. It is hardly necessary for me to repeat at any length here, what I have so often said about Whitman's poems. Let me name but one point, namely, that they offset and correct a strongly marked tendency among us as a people to over-refinement or attenuation of form. As a nation, we are quick, bright, ingenious, deft, but there is a decay of the broader and more fundamental human qualities. We lack mass, inertia, and therefore, power. Our literature is thin and delicate. There is not enough blood, and body, and viscera in it. The character and conscience of the nation are a prey to our intellectual smartness and cleverness. In "Leaves of Grass" these things are corrected. Here the type is large, robust, sympathetic, generous, and truly democratic. And this type is not didactically shown or exploited, but is dramatically illustrated. We see it moving and breathing, a living penetrating personality, among the realities of life—American life. Indeed, I have no hesitation in saying that "Leaves of Grass" is charged with the quality of a live man—not of his mind merely, but of his body also, his

presence—as no other modern poem is. This does not make it acceptable to the popular taste, but it makes it a real and a living production, and a well-spring of stimulating human influences. The great poem must appeal to something more than our sense of the beautiful, indispensable as this is. There is our sense of power, our sense of life, our sense of magnitude, our sense of the universal, our religious and patriotic sense—all these must be addressed also.

There is in current criticism an assumption, often stated, often implied, that the sole office of literature is to amuse, to entertain. The poet is a nimble skater who cuts curious and beautiful flourishes up and down over the deeps and shallows of life. The mass of current poetry aims at little more than this. English poetry in general has aimed at little more than this; that is, it has no deep spiritual significance; the great currents are untouched, uninfluenced by it. But if this can be said of Whitman's poetry, then it is a failure. His work has deepest reference to patriotism, to nationality, to character, and to those things that make life strong and full. It bears the stamp of profound conviction and seriousness, and if it does not do something more to you than merely to entertain you, it will not do that. But I must not continue in this strain.

It is now twenty-five years since I first made the personal acquaintance of our poet, and over twenty years since I first used my pen in his behalf. The memory of those years, those years in Washington, during the latter half of the war and later, I think will be the last to leave me. My life since then has been poor and thin in comparison. Those walks and talks, the great events that filled the air, Whitman in the pride and power of his manhood, the eloquent and chivalrous spirit of William D. O'Connor, so lately passed away, and whose presence among you to-day, as I knew him then, would be like music and banners, my own eager youth and enthusiasm—all combine to make those years the most memorable of my life. But they are gone; a quarter of a century has passed, O'Connor is no more, our Good Gray Poet, whom he so gallantly defended, has reached his seventieth year, and I am sequestered here, on the banks of the Hudson, delving in the soil and trying to give the roots of my life a fresh start, looking wistfully to the past, hungering for the old friends of the old days, and regretting many things, among others, regretting that I am not with you and sharing your festivities on this occasion.

RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE: *London, Ontario, May* 22, 1889.

It was a good thought to mark, as you are doing, the day upon

which our great friend attains to the age of threescore and ten years; and when I say that I wish I could be with you, and grieve that I cannot, believe me, these are no mere formal words.

The friend whom we to-day seek to honor is no ordinary man, and it is well that all of us who have some appreciation of what he is—how great and beneficent his life has been—it is well, I say, that we should, on all suitable occasions, manifest our affection and reverence.

You will not expect that within the narrow compass of a letter I should try to say, even in brief, what our poet has for the last twenty-five years been to me, and what to-day are my feelings towards him. Should I attempt, in my crude, bald phrases, to make such a statement, I should expect nothing else than to be charged with gross exaggeration. I will not make any such attempt, but will simply state, that as my life has advanced from youth until now past middle age, a closer and closer knowledge of Walt Whitman and his writings has served more and more to deepen my early conviction that in this man the modern world has the embodiment of its highest ideal of manhood; that in fact, as a distinguished living writer once said to me, "Walt Whitman is the Saviour, the Redeemer, of the modern world." And I want to say, that however absurd or even blasphemous such words may sound to some, they were originally spoken in all seriousness and reverence, and are repeated now deliberately and with a full realization of their profound significance.

Walt Whitman has (as I believe) lived the highest life yet. That life will be more and more studied and emulated, will sink deeper and deeper into the heart of the race, until the social, human world, through his aid, will reach a level hitherto unattained, even unlooked for. For this new life, so far undreamed, buried in the vast womb of the future, has not yet become, to the world at large, an object even of aspiration. But the spark has been set to the prepared fuel, the living glow has crept deeply into the dormant mass, even now tongues of flame begin to shoot forth. Within no long time the fire will burst out and be seen by all.

Thirty-four years ago Walt Whitman wrote: "The proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it." This proof, in his case, is even now being given. The absorption has begun and will go on; nothing can arrest it. Within fifty years our great poet (far better known then than to his closest friends at present) will stand out before all eyes the typical American—that is to say, the typical modern—the source and centre of a new spiritual aspiration saner and manlier than any heretofore. Say to my friends how dearly I should like to

join them in personal greetings to our loved and honored Good Gray Poet.

WILLIAM SLOANE KENNEDY: *Belmont, Mass., May* 26, 1889.

The celebration of our revered friend's seventieth birthday is first of all a tribute of personal affection. But in the large point of view Walt Whitman is precious to humanity for the general principles he presents and represents—for his superb sketch of a moral life based on deepest scientific philosophy. He is the evangelist of the human heart, and the prototype of the brain and body of the future. The office of such men, in the world economy, is to break up stereotyped thought and institutions, and set free the creative force again; and the hammer that smites, and the arrow that flies, and the hand that wields, are not tools of the deity, but are deity itself at work.

Having myself fought my way out of the thorny and beggarly wilderness of Christian "orthodoxy," Walt Whitman has been to me chiefly of value for his manly ethics and his fresh and joyous paganism—in such quick opposition to the sickly anti-naturalism of historical Christianity. And I think this liberative influence of his words is spreading far and wide. Every week brings evidence. He is studied and magazined at Rome, Paris, London, Edinburgh and St. Petersburg. From Zurich we have recently received a volume of excellent translations out of "Leaves of Grass;" in Paris M. Sarrazin has brought out in book form one of the best estimates of Whitman yet published; while from all parts of Great Britain, he is ever and anon receiving letters of heartfelt acknowledgment. Doubtless the rapidity and extent of the circulation of "Leaves of Grass" in Great Britain are partly due to the appearance there of clipped editions. Whitman's revolutionary doctrine of the body would otherwise have made the diffusion of his works nearly as slow there as here. In a recent story in *Harpers' Monthly*, an American writer represents one of her English characters as quoting from Walt Whitman in conversation, and adds with stinging satire, "No American present recognized the quotation." Yet it is unnecessary to say that in the higher literary circle and the manly circles of America, Whitman is ardently loved.

Here in the eastern New England section of the country, one notes in the representative people, the stiff and severe pharisaism of the Puritan type. English cant in religion, and grasping greed in business, strike hands with the haughty intellectual pride of Harvard College conservatism, and scowl upon any brave foray

out of the ranks of conventionalism. In his New York Inauguration address, even our genial New Englander, James Russell Lowell, says (on the general theme of American literature), "It would be more profitable to think that we have as yet no literature in the highest sense, than to insist that what we have should be judged by other than admitted standards, merely because it is ours." Surely, there spoke the very spirit of Cambridge scholasticism. Imagine the wise dons of Michael Angelo's time shaking their heads and saying, "These sculptures won't do; they are not approved by the admitted standards." So the French thought Shakspere's incomparable creations the wildest rant, because not judgeable by "the admitted standards." And similar criticisms were bestowed at first upon the poems of Hugo, the paintings of Turner and the musical dramas of Wagner. Let the dons then keep within their walls. Their atmosphere is fatal to genius. Science is a good thing, but it is not poetry and it is the antithesis of art. The study of Greek and Roman life especially is strangely productive of haughty aristocratic pride. To the class of intellectual aristocrats Walt Whitman might say in the words of Browning's jolly Aristophanes:

> "Away pretence to some exclusive sphere
> Cloud-nourishing a sole selected few
> Fume-fed with self-superiority!
> I stand up for the common coarse-as-clay existence,
> . . . . . .
> Make haste from your unreal eminence
> And measure lengths with me upon that ground."

Well, dear Walt, accept a thousand good wishes from one who, though he first knew you late in your life (1880), still finds that in you the snows of age have not quenched the fire of love, and though encountering much that is baffling in that impassive Dutch-English nature of yours, yet perseveres in signing himself a candidate for your affection. As I write (in the open air) a fresh open breeze is setting in (I glimpse sails and the white-gleaming sea-water over yonder beyond Medford) and is blowing around the old lane (erst trod by the feet of young Emerson) the honey-smelling fragrance of wild cherry blossoms. We still have a hope that the early season will bring on the rosebuds in time for your birthday. But if it should not do so, look for them later.

SIDNEY H. MORSE: *Chicago, Ills., May* 27, 1889.

Could I be present with you at the celebration of Walt's seventieth birthday, it would yield me great and lasting pleasure. But I am here on the "Open Road," doing such work as falls

to me, and cannot leave it now and turn back even to greet our good friend and comrade with birthday congratulations and love.

There are those living in my memory—Walt conspicuous among them—who are in no way represented by years. I never think of their age. They are simply themselves—the same yesterday, to-day and forever. They are, to quote our poet, "Time always without break." I have learned this well, becoming acquainted with the different persons of whom I have sought to give some account in clay. "At what age?" I am asked; and have to reply, to be serious and truthful—"At no age. I have sought for the personality, the mental poise, the spirit, the out-look. What is it he is? What does he see? How he salutes me—not by years, few or many, but as a living soul."

These, and such as these, are the questions I delight to answer in my clay, and with words when I can find them.

So, now, turning to Walt Whitman, that he is seventy does not much signify. That he will ever be other than alive is a thought that does not cross my mind. One of the eternal verities he must be and would be though he had never written his book. But with his poems comes anew the word that, by whomsoever spoken, does not pass away. It is a new clue to the Infinite beyond.

"I tramp," he says, "a perpetual journey"—

And—

"To look up and down no road but it stretches and waits for you, however long but it stretches and waits for you.

. . . . . .

"To know the universe itself as a road, as many roads, as roads for travelling souls."

Walt is the soul-traveller?

Democratic, for he would greet, and have along with him, all souls else.

And this is why he is "a maker of poems."

> "The maker of poems settles justice, reality, immortality,
> His insight and power encircle things and the human race."

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN: *"Kelp Rock," New Castle, N. H., May* 27, 1889.

Thank you for inviting me, as one of Walt Whitman's friends, to join the festival in honor of our poet's seventieth birthday.

You know it would give me satisfaction to be with you. But

your letter, which has now followed me here, reached New York after I had left upon a brief visit to this island, being in need of relief from illness and continuous work. All I can do is to give my heartiest love to Whitman, with congratulations upon his entering, with Lowell, the decade of life which Whittier and Holmes have so lustily rounded. For him, too, in his own fine phrase, "from noon to starry night," may the omens be propitious! Long may it be ere we are called upon to say to Walt Whitman,

> "The untold want by life and land ne'er granted,
> Now voyager sail thou forth to seek and find."

FRANK B. SANBORN: *Concord, Mass., May* 29, 1889.

The name of my ancient friend, Walt Whitman, does indeed awaken in me a response; for at no time, since Emerson directed my attention to his "Leaves of Grass" in 1855, have I failed to notice what he was saying or doing. Not always with complete approval, of course; that he did not expect, nor indeed wish, as I suppose; his course through his own time being made, like the course of a boat through the water, by the resistance of the surrounding medium to his efforts. If the water should not resist and push against our oars, which of us could make any headway? But the voyage of Whitman has been a bold and forward one, guided by the stars and not by the winds and currents; he has tugged manfully at the oars and has had his own compass to steer by. I lament that it is now so nearly over, and that my little boat must apparently run on for a few years without having his noble barge within hail. Such are the conditions of this world's navigation, to which none of my contemporaries have known how to submit more gracefully than Whitman,—taking his orders, as we all must, from that great sailing-master whose is the fleet and the ocean, and the seaman himself.

I would fain send a message to Whitman, on this special occasion, since I cannot be present with him and you and all his friends. And it shall be a verse from my neighbor Ellery Channing, who alone of surviving American poets can vie with Whitman in the grand manner of the older singers:

> "Brave be thy heart, O sailor of the world!
> Erect thy vision, strong and resolute.
> Let disappointments strike, and leaden days
> Visit thee like a snowdrift across flowers;
> Even in a little this rude voyage is done;
> Then heave the time-stained anchor, trim thy sails,
> And o'er the bosom of the untrammelled deep
> Ride in the heavenly boat and touch near stars."

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS: *Boston, Mass., May* 21, 1889.

I am too far away to be able to dine with you in celebration of the seventieth birthday of the great poet whom you share with the whole English-speaking world. But I am not too far to wish him, through you, health and larger and larger life. It will be a long life here in the memories of all who know how to value a liberator in any kind.

JOHN G. WHITTIER: *Amesbury, Mass., May* 24, 1889.

I have received thy kind letter and the invitation to the proposed observance of W. Whitman's seventieth birthday. At my age and in my state of health I can only enclose a slight token of good-will, with the wish that he may have occasion to thank God for renewed health and many more birthdays, and for the consolation which must come from the recollection of generous services rendered to the sick and suffering Union soldiers in the hospitals of Washington during the Civil War.

SYLVESTER BAXTER: *Boston, Mass., May* 29, 1889.

I wish I might give adequate expression to my regret at inability to attend your celebration of our great poet's seventieth birthday. I am indebted to my friend and colleague, Frederick Russell Guernsey, of the *Herald*, and now resident in Mexico, for my first knowledge of the greatness and beauty of Whitman's verse. Before, I had shared the average prejudice born of ignorance; but when I had once been persuaded to read his grand words, a new world of glory and beauty was opened to my vision. Among my pleasantest recollections is that of first meeting Whitman when he came to Boston to read his lecture on the anniversary of Lincoln's death, and of the many delightful hours passed with him on his subsequent visit, when he spent several weeks here preparing his completed "Leaves of Grass" for publication.

When I think of what I would like to say I remember "Leaves of Grass," and that it has all been said there. But as I write, the thought occurs to me that this is the month of the Laurel's bloom; that I have just seen the starry flowers illuminating its evergreen masses with their pure brightness on the mountain-tops about Chattanooga—the historic heights of Lookout, and of Walden's Ridge—and that, speeding homewards, I saw the same glorious floral clusters adorning the New England hillsides. Our national flower, then, should be the Mountain Laurel, whose branches form the crown of poets and of heroes—that, as we see

it blooming from South to North, tells us as we gaze that our country is one, reunited in bonds stronger than ever.

Of all the honored men whom America rightly loves as its poets, and who, on the day that sees them reach the end of seven decades, have bared their heads to receive the laurel wreath from their fellows, I hail Walt Whitman as the greatest—the one who has attained the largest measure of a great individuality in identifying himself with his fellows of all degrees; in his wonderful sympathy, that has enabled him to live their lives and think their thoughts, to sound the dark depths of human nature and soar high in the illimitable expanse of the human soul. The verdict of posterity will be, I believe, that no other poet whom our rich century has known has so grandly achieved the task set to all men by the divine impulse implanted in every bosom, of epitomizing in one individual the life of the world.

America owes Walt Whitman her everlasting gratitude for the high standard of patriotic aspiration and duty he has set in his words for his countrymen, and whose sacred torch shall be passed down the centuries by the unknown bearers they shall inspire, bound together by the invisible ties of comradeship, continually lighting the way that leads the race towards as yet unimaginable heights rising in the broadening perspective of "Democratic Vistas." By learning the lesson that only by living each for all, and all for each, can true and great individuality be attained, we shall see the grand words, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, in their real meanings, and make them the foundation for our Nation that without them can be but the mockery of its form. As one of the humblest of those comrades, and with honor and love for Walt Whitman, I inscribe myself.

T. B. ALDRICH: *Boston, Mass., May* 20, 1889.

I have just returned from a vacation, and shall not be able to leave home again so soon, or I would certainly make the pilgrimage to Camden to greet Walt Whitman on his seventieth birthday. . . . I did myself the honor awhile ago to remind W. W. of my remembrance of him.

FELIX ADLER: *New York, May* 18, 1889.

It is altogether lamentable that I must miss the dinner. . . . I am sure you know, and Walt Whitman will appreciate, what a sacrifice it is for me to stay away, and how much and how affectionately I am in harmony with those who will sit around the festive board. . . . It is no mere *facon parler* to say that I sincerely regret my inability to be present.

HORACE HOWARD FURNESS: *Wallingford, Pa., May 27*, 1889.

I deeply regret that my engagements will not possibly permit me to be present, and that I cannot thus testify my respect and admiration for him whom you will meet to honor. He has lived to find—

> "The stubborn thistles bursting
> Into glossy purples, which out-redden
> All voluptuous garden roses."

From the heights of a life invincibly true to the ideals of his youth, unswerving throughout in his honesty, standing "four-square to all the winds that blow," with a heart instantly sensitive to every impulse of beauty, he must know of a surety that "eternal sunshine will settle on his head." With profound respects to him and thanks to you.

GEORGE W. CHILDS: *Philadelphia, May 22*, 1889.*

My Dear Old Friend—I want to be present to congratulate you on your seventieth birthday, and to tell you how glad I am that kind Providence has preserved your health, and given you as many appreciative friends. God bless you.

MARK TWAIN: *Hartford, Conn., May 24*, 1889.

To Walt Whitman—You have lived just the seventy years which are greatest in the world's history, and richest in benefit and advancement to its peoples. These seventy years have done much more to widen the interval between man and the other

* Enclosed was a printed slip, reading as follows:

CAMBRIDGE, *March 13*, 1877.

My Dear Mr. Childs—You do not know yet, what it is to be seventy years old. I will tell you, so that you may not be taken by surprise, when your turn comes.

It is like climbing the Alps. You reach a snow-crowned summit, and see behind you the deep valley stretching miles and miles away, and before you other summits higher and whiter, which you may have strength to climb, or may not. Then you sit down and meditate, and wonder which it will be.

That is the whole story, amplify it as you may. All that one can say is, that life is opportunity.

With seventy good wishes to the dwellers on Walnut Street, corner of Twenty-second, Yours very truly,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

animals than was accomplished by any five centuries which preceded them.

What great births you have witnessed! The steam-press, the steamship, the steel-ship, the railroad, the perfected cotton-gin, the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the photograph, the photogravure, the electrotype, the gaslight, the electric light, the sewing-machine, and the amazing, infinitely varied and innumerable products of coal-tar, those latest and strangest marvels of a marvelous age. And you have seen even greater births than these; for you have seen the application of anæsthesia to surgery-practice, whereby the ancient dominion of pain, which began with the first created life, came to an end in this earth forever; you have seen the slave set free; you have seen monarchy banished from France, and reduced in England to a machine which makes an imposing show of diligence and attention to business, but isn't connected with the works. Yes, you have indeed seen much; but tarry yet awhile, for the greatest is yet to come. Wait thirty years, and *then* look out over the earth! You shall see marvels upon marvels added to these whose nativity you have witnessed; and conspicuous above them you shall see their formidable Result—Man at almost his full stature at last!—and still growing, visibly growing, while you look. In that day, who that hath a throne, or a gilded privilege not attainable by his neighbor, let him procure him slippers and get ready to dance, for there is going to be music. Abide, and see these things! Thirty of us who honor and love you, offer the opportunity. We have among us six hundred years, good and sound, left in the bank of life. Take thirty of them—the richest birthday gift ever offered to poet in this world—and sit down and wait. Wait till you see that great figure appear, and catch the far glint of the sun upon his banner; then you may depart satisfied, as knowing you have seen him for whom the world was made, and that he will proclaim that human wheat is worth more than human tares, and proceed to reorganize human value on that basis.

With best wishes for a happy issue to a grateful undertaking.

WILL CARLETON: *Brooklyn, June* 10, 1889.

. . . My only way of learning of the Whitman Testimonial was through the papers, until my return home yesterday. It is needless to say, that had it been possible, I should have enjoyed participating in that tribute of respect and affection to one whom all that read with the soul as well as the eye admire so much. Give Walt Whitman my kindest regards, and hopes that we shall have a chance to give him a good many birthday dinners yet. . . .

WILLIAM M. SALTER: *Chicago, May* 27, 1889.

I have my first chance this morning to think of your kind invitation, and feel it an honor to be asked to say a word on so important an occasion. The few moments I was privileged to see Whitman, through your friendliness, will remain with me as a rare recollection. Such simplicity and such dignity, all the more touching because of physical weariness, one does not often see blended in this fast-rushing time. I seemed to be transported to the times of the old patriarchs, and the "large utterance of the early gods." Not anything he said, but his way of saying it, and the figure of the man, will never be forgotten by me.

JOHN W. CHADWICK: *Brooklyn, May* 24, 1889.

It would give me great pleasure to assist in doing honor to Walt Whitman on his seventieth birthday, but it so happens that on the 31st instant I shall be in Boston fulfilling an engagement made long since. I am very sure that in the crowd who will be there to honor the venerable poet, I shall not be missed, but I do not like to miss the opportunity of meeting one whom I have long held in reverence. We have had plenty of poets, who while imagining themselves lovers of nature, have done their best to hide her under pretty words; and we have had plenty of preachers, who while imagining that they love God, despise his handiwork. I love and honor Whitman for his different way—his glad acceptance of the world and all that it contains—his boundless faith in Nature, Man, Immortality and God. May he enjoy the day and many days to come, ere he goes on without a fear.

GEORGE H. BOKER: *Philadelphia, May* 28, 1889.

I have a great regard for Whitman, both as a poet and as a noble example of manhood, and I shall always be ready to do anything that may tend to his comfort or his relief. Please to express to him my regret at not being able to meet him at the proposed dinner, from which hard necessity forces me to be absent.

JOHN A. COCKRILL: *"World" Office, N. Y., May* 29, 1889.

I regret that my duties prevent my joining with you in your proposed tribute to the poet Whitman on his seventieth birthday. America owes much to the strong, rugged, virile pen of this lover of Man and Nature. Every line that he has written pulsates with

L. of C.

manhood, and is sentient with the touch of broad humanity. It is gratifying to know that his work is growing in the esteem of all true friends of literature, and that his great thoughts will live when the jingling rhymes of some of our sweet-voiced poets are forgotten.

JULIUS CHAMBERS: *"World" Office, N. Y., May* 27, 1889.

My Dear Good Gray Poet—I have received the word which you were thoughtful and kind enough to send me, and with it your expression of a desire that I should be present at the dinner which your appreciative fellow-countrymen are about to give you in commemoration of your birthday. I thank you, my dear sir, for your remembrance, and shall cherish it as long as I live. I am a much overworked young man (though only "starting out in life," as compared with your years of fruitful effort), and cannot go to Camden, much as I would wish to. When I say that I respect you, you will understand me; were I to say that I love you, I would only speak the truth. Yours is a great, big personality, and your hall-mark on English verse will endure as long as the language itself.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS: *West New Brighton, Staten Island, N. Y., May* 26, 1889.

I am very sorry that I shall be unable to attend the dinner in honor of Mr. Whitman's completion of his seventieth year, but I wish to join in the tribute to a man who has bravely and quietly walked by his inner light, and who has never quitted his belief, whenever it was his belief, as Emerson says, "that a pop-gun is a pop-gun, though the ancient and honorable of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom."

JEANNETTE L. GILDER: *"Critic" Office, N. Y., May* 29, 1889.

In reply to yours of the 26th, I can only say that Mr. Whitman has always had my best wishes, and they are his for many years to come, I hope. When you drink his health, take two sips from your glass, and let one be for me to his long life and every happiness.

JOHN HABBERTON: *Fortress Monroe, Va., May* 29, 1889.

I greatly regret that absolute necessity of being in New York, Friday P. M., will prevent me joining personally in the testimonial to good old Walt; but I certainly will try to put my heart on paper, to best of my ability, in the old man's honor.

WILLIAM C. GANNETT: *Hinsdale, Ill., May* 20, 1889.

May he live as long as loving and being loved can make life beautiful to him! In Mr. Morse's studio I last week saw a noble picture of him with his arms around the children.

H. D. BUSH: *Lachine Locks, P. Q, May* 20, 1889.

You will doubtless understand, what I can perhaps not explain, why I feel such a debt of gratitude towards Walt Whitman. . . . I hope to be able to see him some time, and thank him for his poems and his life-work, now, I suppose, nearly ended. . . . There are many of Mr. Whitman's poems which any right-minded person ought to enjoy. Perhaps it is my experience with workingmen, and ability to understand and succeed with them through my sympathy for them, which enables me to enjoy some of the poems which the critics most delight to ridicule; and Mrs. Bush has been deeply touched by his appreciation of music. Please give our respectful regards to him, and our congratulations on his approaching seventieth birthday.

RICHARD J. HINTON: *Washington, D. C., May* 30, 1889.

My Dear Walt—Let me send my hand and heart to you in this pen-scrawl, bearing loving, reverential congratulations to you on your seventieth birthday. I'm so glad you are still here in your familiar form; the other Walt, the "comrade of all," will be among us always. Accept, then, by love, by hopes of other birthdays, my fraternal and gladsome kiss and word on this birthday. . . . I would have liked to have been at the dinner, but as I did not know of it till within two days . . . I could not arrange. . . . My wife joins me fully.

J. F. GARRISON, *Camden, N. J., May* 23, 1889.

. . . . I am particularly sorry not to be able to join with you in your expression of respect and admiration for one so widely and deservedly recognized wherever the English language is spoken as a poet and a thinker of high rank and place among the noteworthy poets of the time . . . . whom also most or perhaps all of us have valued not only as a writer, but in the simple and unostentatious character of the genial and respected friend. But even more than the genius of the poet do I admire and honor Mr. Whitman for traits which I am sure he would himself place higher than any reputation that his writings may have given him. . . . .

BY WIRE

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[REPRINT OF CIRCULAR ANNOUNCING THE CELEBRATION.]

Whitman Testimonial.

WALT WHITMAN IS RAPIDLY NEARING HIS SEVENTIETH YEAR.

To properly commemorate the occasion on the arrival of his Three Score and Ten Natal Day, citizens of Camden have inaugurated a local demonstration which, to make it all the more imposing and fitting as a representative gathering of the Friends and Disciples of the **POET,** will include those at a distance who may wish to participate.

The Committee is already assured that a number of prominent Literary characters will be present and join in the ovation, in sentiments predicated upon

WHITMAN'S PERSONALITY AND PRODUCTIONS.

In order that the Programme may be prepared, it is essential that early responses to invitations shall be received by the Committee, which has fixed the price of

TICKETS AT $5.00,

And provides for no complimentaries, as, in addition to the public entertainment, it is intended that a substantial benefit shall accrue to the recipient.

The Dinner will be given at MORGAN'S HALL, CAMDEN (a large and commodious room), on

FRIDAY, MAY 31st.

The hour of **5 O'CLOCK** in the Afternoon has been fixed in order to assure the personal presence of the POET.

The Tickets have been limited to TWO HUNDRED. Application should be made at once to the Committee.

H. L. BONSALL,
T. B. HARNED,
COMMITTEE.

Address CAMDEN, N. J.

BY WIRE:

HENRY IRVING: *London, England, June* 2, 1889.

To Walt Whitman—Let me add to the many my respectful and sincere greetings.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL: *New York, May* 31, 1889.

Am confined to my house by illness, and regret that I can't be with you to-day. Give my more than regards to Walt Whitman, who has won such a splendid victory over the "granitic pudding-heads" of the world. He is a genuine Continental American.

THOMAS JEFFERSON WHITMAN: *St. Louis, May* 31, 1889.

To Walt Whitman—Congratulations on reaching the seventy notch. Hope you will complete another score.

MRS. A. H. SPAULDING: *Boston, Mass., May* 31, 1889.

To Walt Whitman—Your many friends give thanks for your brave and generous seventy years.

MRS. FANNY TAYLOR: *St. Louis, May* 31, 1889.

To Walt Whitman—Many congratulations upon reaching your three-score-and-ten.

FELIX ADLER: *New York, May* 31, 1889.

To the author of "Calamus," loving greeting to-day from a younger comrade.

T. B. ALDRICH: *Boston, May* 31, 1889.

Heartiest congratulations to Walt Whitman from his old friend and comrade.

J. H. GILMAN: *Rochester, N. Y., May* 27, 1889.

Sorry that I cannot be present to add my tribute to one whom I regard as in some respects the greatest of American poets.

*THEN, POSTSCRIPT.**

H. Buxton Forman: *London, Eng., July* 20, 1889.

. . . For Whitman, so long as there is life, there must be happiness. The knowledge of what he has done for the human race, coupled with his indomitable courage and endurance, must make him ever superior to the chances of broken health and fortunes. . . . At your bidding, I will say a word of what I think, though it be but a repetition of what I have said before. I think, then, that for the poet whose seventieth birthday was celebrated on the 31st of May, the word poet needs enlargement so as to include somewhat of the meaning of the word prophet. Whitman, of all living men, deserves best to be called the prophet of the world's hope; for of all he is the most absolute in his optimism, the most unwavering in his faith in the ultimate perfection of the great scheme of nature. To me he seems to be more at one with the external universe, less disturbed about the profound questions which the soul strives to answer, than any man whose record is before us; and whatever else "Leaves of Grass" may be, I have long held it to be the most original book which the world has yet produced, and the book which, of all current literature, contains the greatest number of messages to mankind which mankind will have to consider whether they be found convenient and palatable or inconvenient and unpalatable.

Daniel G. Brinton: *Geneva, Switzerland, July* 17, 1889.

. . . It gave me especial pleasure to learn that our national poet's seventieth birthday had been celebrated in so successful a manner, and that he himself is feeling at least no worse in health than when I left, and is, as ever, and as he must ever be, so firm and so serene in soul. When I was at Parma, I saw a picture by Murillo, one of the greatest of that greatest of masters, representing Job in his direst affliction, lone, naked, deserted, his potsherd in his hand, but looking up to heaven with an utter faith that I have seen in no other painting, and that, as I told ——, I could parallel in nothing else than in those lines of Whitman's on Columbus,

> "For that, O God, be it my latest word, here on my knees,
> Old, poor, and paralyzed, I thank Thee."

I am certain that in these noble words the poet has expressed the calmness in affliction which is his own, and though I cannot share in the faith which it breathes, I honor and admire any disposition of mind which lifts the man above his fate.

* From letters received in last moments.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS: *Davos, Switzerland, September 3, 1889.*

I find it extremely difficult to write anything about Walt Whitman: not because I have little, but because I have far too much to say.

"Leaves of Grass," which I first read at the age of twenty-five, influenced me more perhaps than any other book has done, except the Bible; more than Plato, more than Goethe. It is impossible for me to speak critically of what has so deeply entered into the fibre and marrow of my being.

Walt Whitman helped me to understand the harmony between democracy, science, and that larger religion to which the modern world is being led by the conception of human brotherhood and by the spirituality inherent in any really scientific view of the universe. He gave body and concrete vitality to the religious creed which I had previously been forming upon the study of Goethe, the Greek and Roman Stoics, Giordano Bruno, and the founders of the Evolution hypothesis. He brought me to attempt to free myself from many conceits and pettinesses to which academical culture is subject. He opened my eyes to the beauty, goodness and greatness which may be found in all worthy human beings, the humblest and the highest. He made me try to strip myself of social prejudices. Through him I have fraternized in comradeship with men of all classes and several races, irrespective of their caste, creed, occupation and special training.

Though my energy, as a writer, has been mainly devoted to those critical studies for which my education prepared me, my life, as a man, has been sweetened, brightened and intensified by the Good Gray Poet's invigorating and ennobling influence. Before long I hope to publish a collection of speculative and philosophical essays, in which the debt I owe him and the benefits I have received from him will be apparent to all who, like myself, call themselves his disciples.

GABRIEL SARRAZIN: *Paris, France.*

Excerpt from long essay (which see) in the French book, "Poesie Anglaise," pub'd in Paris, 1888.

* * * * "Leaves of Grass," indeed, is outside of being a purely poetic work, at least in the sense of the older literatures. It is useless to seek here the refinement and impeccable virtue of Tennyson. Walt Whitman is *not* an artist; *he is above art.* Not only do the words of his verse fail of being the most choice, but he laughs at proportion and composition. By "cultivated" critics he is charged with affecting the rude, involved, encum-

bered. The religious and barbaric lyrism which Anglo-Saxon poetry possesses in common with the Bible is in "Leaves of Grass" interspersed with a multitude of prosaic images, infinity of details, and minute enumerations of all points of view. Our Latin [Italian, Spanish, French] genius soberly prunes down extravaganzas, and knows nothing, ordinarily, of such lawless modes of portrayal. It takes them for chaos, and there commits the gravest of errors. Without wishing to defend exuberance, or oppose "good taste," it will be permitted me to say that this last should only dominate writings which aim at pure art, where form is so paramount in importance as to relegate substance to the background. Where larger works are in question, however—works wherein all exterior appearances and human masses precipitate themselves—where at the same time battalions of sensations, sentiments and ideas enter the breach —where science and morality and esthetics are fused—where such creations are concerned, the horizon widens strangely. Then come no other rules save those of nobility and strength of spirit; and these suffice amply to create a most unlooked-for and grandiose aspect of beauty. The reader may encounter what is difficult and distasteful, but it will not alter the fact that, if the author *has* sprinkled through his work a throng of touches at first sight prosaic, yet in reality these very touches contribute to the poetry of the *ensemble*. Although they be miracles of chiselling, models fashioned of cinder and mud will always remain cinder and mud. But overcrowded and disorderly as it may be, if heroic emotion and thought and enthusiasm vitalize it, a work will always be of perfect beauty.

☞ *By mail (or express). Address Walt Whitman, Camden, New Jersey. Send P. O. draft, payable to W. W.'s order.*

Complete Poems and Prose (1855 to 1888) of Walt Whitman. Portraits from Life. Autograph. 900 pages, octavo, plain binding. Price $6; (when sent by mail, 40 cents more.)

Leaves of Grass (small ed'n) includes "Sands at Seventy" and "Backward Glance." Six portraits from life. Autograph. Full gilt, morocco b'd'g, pocket book style. Price $5.

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